LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN

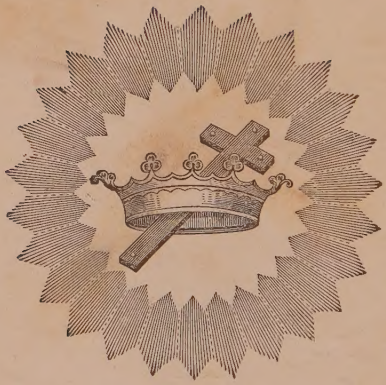
KELLOGG & Co
Wholesale
&
Retail
DEALERS IN

Mike Courtney

LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.



the Stair of the cross

LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

By ISAAC ERRETT,

AUTHOR OF "WALKS ABOUT JERUSALEM," "TALKS TO BEREANS," ETC., ETC.

"And now, little children, abide in him: that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."—1 JOHN ii. 28.

CINCINNATI:
STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY,
180 ELM STREET.
1877.

Copyrighted by STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1877.

CHASE & HALL, PRINTERS AND BINDERS.

TO

GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN,

WHO DESIRE TO

GROW IN GRACE AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF

OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST,

THIS

LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN the early part of the year 1876, when the churches were receiving unusully large additions, the editor of the Christian Standard wrote a series of articles addressed to young disciples, as a help to the many who were just entering on the Christian life. He had no thought then of writing a book. But numerous and urgent requests that these articles might be published in book form, and thus meet a general want, have induced him to revise and considerably enlarge his editorial essays, and offer them to the public in the form in which they now appear. He did not, when he wrote them, and does not now, think them of sufficient merit to entitle them to a permanent place in religious literature; but he defers to the judgment of many whose wishes he does not feel at liberty to disregard. There is this to be said of these Letters: they travel in no beaten track. The writer has drawn from his own experience and observation, and especially from the experience of his early Christian life, such suggestions as he thinks will be most helpful to young Christians. In place of burdening the reader with rules, he seeks to inspire him with Christian sentiments and establish him in Christian principles. He sends his unpretentious volume forth on its mission, with the prayer that it may be made helpful to the inexperienced, in leading them into true paths of life, and in guarding them from the discouragements and perils of the early years of their Christian pilgrimage.

CONTENTS.

LETTER.		PAGE.
I.	The Means of Grace	11– 20
II.	Christian Fellowship	21– 30
III.	The Lord's Supper	31– 39
IV.	Prayer and Praise	40– 47
V.	Dangers	48– 55
VI.	Deceptive Views of the New Life	56– 67
VII.	Temptation	68– 78
VIII.	The Fatherhood of God	79– 86
IX.	Vigilance	87– 90
X.	Earnestness	91– 99
XI.	Decision of Character	100–111
XII.	Flesh and Spirit	112–119
XIII.	Love for Jesus	120–126
XIV.	Leisure Hours—Society	127–137
XV.	Suggestions	138–143

AIDS TO DEVOTION 144–176

Adoration 148

Thanksgiving 151

Morning Prayer 153

Evening Prayer 156

Prayer in Distress 159

Reading and Meditation 161

Prayer 162

Prayer on the Lord's Day 164

Confession 167

Intercession 171

LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER I.

IT is a great joy to me, my dear young friend, to know that you have been fully persuaded to become a Christian, and have entered into a holy covenant with God in Christ. This, believe me, is the most important step you have ever taken, since it puts your life and destiny into the hands of Him who is able to save from sin, death and hell. You have given your heart to Jesus in humble trust and love, turning away from the sins of your former life to walk in obedience to His will. Relying for pardon and acceptance with God on that Saviour who "died for our sins, and rose again for our justification," you have, as one dead to sin, been "buried with Him by baptism into death," and have risen from that symbolical

grave to "walk in newness of life." You are thus a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for in being baptized into Christ, you have put on Christ; and if you are Christ's, then you are a child of God, and an heir of eternal life according to his promise. Your sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb. God is your Father. Jesus is your Elder Brother and Redeemer. The Holy Spirit is your Comforter and the earnest of your inheritance. Christians are your brethren. Angels are your ministering servants. "All things are yours" to use for the promotion of the objects of your new life; and heaven is your inheritance. Truly, eye had not seen, ear had not heard, nor had it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. They transcend, not only all human expectation, but all human imagination. But God has revealed them by his Spirit in that glorious gospel of grace which you have heard, believed and obeyed. For this amazing grace, and for its blessed conquests in your heart and life, there is the greatest reason for thankfulness and rejoicing before God; and I doubt not you do rejoice with exceeding joy. Please accept my most hearty con-

gratulations on your entrance into a new life, and be assured of my constant prayer that "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so you may walk in him—rooted in him, and grounded upon him, and established in the faith wherein you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."*

I am gratified, too, that you desire assistance from those who have had large experience in the Christian life. This is wise. It will be to me a great pleasure to give you what help I can, and through you, in this public way, to offer counsel to others, who, like yourself, are yet in Christian infancy. In venturing into untried paths, they are apt to feel the need of guidance, and nothing is more grateful to them than a kindly interest in their welfare on the part of those who are able to assist them. They are deeply in earnest to make their new life a success, and anxious to know by what means this can be done.

It is best, in this matter, to adhere as closely as possible to divine models. You have come into the peace and joy of the gospel thus far, by following the teachings of

---

* Col. ii. 6, 7.

the New Testament; continue to walk by the same rule. "If you continue in my teaching," said Jesus, "then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." *

We are informed that "they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day there were added (to the original number of disciples) about three thousand souls."† So far, my friend has followed in the footsteps of the first converts in Jerusalem. What do we next read of these converts? "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."‡ This is clearly the path in which all converts must walk—these the divinely ordained means of spiritual nourishment and growth; for as certainly as the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit in preaching Christ, and announcing the terms of salvation, so certainly did the same Spirit guide them in the choice of means for nourishing and educating their converts. We accept it, then, as the will of God, that those who gladly receive the gospel, and are baptized

---

* John viii. 31, 32. † Acts ii. 41. ‡ Acts ii. 42.

and added to the church, should begin at once to receive apostolic instruction concerning the Christian life, and "steadfastly continue" in this task.

It is not supposable that a new-born child of God can have much knowledge of spiritual life, any more than that a babe, just born into this world, can know much of the life on which it enters. There must be *life* before the things pertaining to that life can be known or put to use. There must be a new heart before the doctrine of the new life can be loved, appreciated, or appropriated. The truths of Christian life are "spiritually discerned." Hence the first thing is, to win the heart to God by the gospel, before burdening it with Christian doctrine. The order in which our Lord places the means of spiritual life, is: 1. Come unto me (believe on me). 2. Take my yoke upon you (be baptized in my name). 3. Learn of me.* The same view is given by Paul. The grace of God first brings salvation, and then *teaches* us, that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this pres-

---

*Matt. xi. 28, 29.

ent world."* The heart, won from unbelief and sin, filled with love, and rejoicing in salvation, is prepared to listen to the lessons of duty. Hence, says Peter: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."†

The "apostles' teaching" evidently included every thing that belonged to the new life—its duties, its privileges, its dangers, its hopes, its friends, its foes, and all the high motives by which this life is to be inspired; and particularly all that could make their pupils familiar with "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus"—his incarnation, life, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension; his work of mediation, intercession, and ruling, as Prophet, Priest, and King. Much of their teaching we have in the twenty-one epistles addressed to individuals or to churches, and dealing with the various phases of Christian life, personal, social and congregational. But these epistles will constantly refer us back to the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as to various portions of the Old Testament.

---

*Tit. ii. 14; iii. 3–8, †1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

It is safe, then, to say that the *New Testament* should now be the study of the young Christian, with such references to the Old Testament as it contains.

This being settled, we have several suggestions to make, based on experience and observation, which we are sure will be helpful to the young disciple:

1. It is important to have *one Bible* for your regular reading. In time, you learn to *locate* passages so that you can turn to them with a readiness never to be acquired if you use different editions. Moreover, your spiritual experience will so inweave itself with your readings, that your Bible will become a storehouse of the most sacred and precious memories.

2. Get a *good* one, if you can at all afford it—good paper, good print, good binding; one that will last a life-time. Cheap books are, in the end, the dearest. Avoid type too small and dim, such as will strain the eyes in reading. If you can not afford to buy Bagster's, or the next best, and but little inferior—the "Teachers' Reference Bible," published by Eyre and Spottiswode, London—then get one of convenient size published by the American Bible Society,

with tables, maps, and pretty much all the aids needed for Bible study.

3. Make it a rule to read regularly and conscientiously the New Testament. Insist on it as on your daily food. Do not take very large lessons, nor read in a hurry. Yet let your *first* reading be more to get the general scope of its teachings, than to obtain a critical knowledge of every expression. Subsequent readings can be more minutely critical.

4. Do not stop over difficult texts, nor expect to understand every thing at once. Milk, not meat, is your present want. Mark the texts which you do not understand, and go on; you will find, in subsequent readings, that your growing knowledge will enable you to understand much that was at first mysterious. If you could grasp it all at once, there would be nothing left to learn.

5. Pay especial attention to such parts as you can appropriate to yourself, either in the way of commandment, promise, warning, or example. Ask, at every reading, *What is there here for me?* And let your prayer be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and show

me if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting."*

6. Where the convert is the head of a family, let him get Bibles for all that can read, and have daily readings and conversations with wife, children and servants.

7. Do not be anxious to get helps in the way of commentaries, sermons, etc. Such a Bible as we have recommended, and a Concordance, will furnish you about all the help you need. Do not even rely much on a Concordance. Try first to find for yourself what you want. It may be well to get a good Bible Dictionary, such as Smith's abridged. Then go to work and dig out the truth for yourself. You will find that if you search for wisdom as for silver, and dig for it as for hidden treasures, you will be rewarded, and the Bible will prove largely self-interpreting.†

8. Reflect that there is no real enjoyment for you in Christian life, only as you make its treasures *your own*. The material of your happiness must be found *within* you. Your soul can not live on other people's knowledge, any more than your body can live on the food eaten by others. "Have salt in yourselves."‡

* Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. † Prov. ii. 1–5. ‡ Mark ix. 50.

9. After a time, a more extensive course of reading will be desirable in the Old Testament, and in other religious books. But for the present you will find your greatest profit and delight in the faithful and devout study of the New Testament.

Let me express the hope that, by proper attention to these suggestions, you may soon be able to say, with the prophet, as the result of your experience: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart."*

---

* Jer. xv. 16.

LETTER II.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

"For we are members one of another."—EPH. iv. 25.

WE have spoken of the apostles' teaching. Another means of spiritual culture in the primitive church was *the fellowship*. "They continued steadfastly in . . . the fellowship." It is foreign to our present purpose to enter upon a critical investigation of the word fellowship in its New Testament applications. The general idea may be gained without this.

1. The word carries the idea of *society*. Young Christians were not left to stand alone and fight the battles of the new life without sympathy or assistance. They entered at once into sacred and loving association with all others of similar faith and purpose, and enjoyed all the advantages to be derived from the sympathy, encouragement and help of such associates. In entering on

new relations to Christ, they came into new relations to all who are his—not only *new*, but *equal*, relations; for in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* No difference what may be the distance between them in a worldly sense, in point of intelligence, refinement, wealth, or social position; as children of God, and as sinners saved by grace, they are all on one level: "All ye are brethren."† And as they have purified their souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, they are to "love one another with pure hearts fervently."‡

The lesson suggested here for the young disciple, is: *Seek your associates among Christians.* While it is true that in becoming a Christian you were brought into immediate *personal* relations with God, and that your success depends primarily on your own individual faith and steadfastness, it is at the same time true—and especially so for the first few years of your new life—that you will be greatly aided by the influence of favorable associations. We are not only susceptible of in-

* Gal. iii. 28. † Matt. xxiii. 8. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 22.

fluence from others, but we are so certain to be brought under its power by constant association, that even where we dislike and resist it, the continual dropping is sure to wear the stone. Our daily duties call us often into unfavorable associations, which, as Christians, we dislike, and even some times detest; yet in spite of our opposition, experience teaches that insensibly this perpetual contact asserts its power over us, and too often leads us astray. We are social beings. We are imitative beings. Our love of approbation, our desire to please, and our craving for sympathy, will lead us to place ourselves on as pleasant a footing as possible with those who are our associates in business or in the social circle. We must make them such as we are, or we must become such as they are, or by mutual attraction each will be drawn nearer to the other. Where these associations, however necessary, are unfavorable to our spiritual growth, there is the more need for the counteracting influences of congenial associations in the church. Hence it should be settled with young disciples (1) to be regular and faithful in attendance at all the meetings of the church which it is possible to attend; (2) to have their social standing,

as far as possible, among Christians, and such as sympathize with the aims of Christian life. Remember that "a man is known by the company he keeps;" and that "evil communications corrupt good manners."

2. Fellowship implies *community of interest.* Thus we read that in the Jerusalem church "they had all things common." Indeed, the most prominent feature of the fellowship in that church was a community of goods. Those who had goods and possessions sold them, and shared the proceeds with the needy. This, it is true, was voluntary; no one was bound to do it.* It grew out of the peculiar circumstances of that infant community, and was not carried beyond Jerusalem into other churches as an essential feature of Christian society. But being voluntary, it is the more remarkable as a spontaneous and legitimate outflow of true Christian principle. In its essence, it was the genuine exhibition of the Christian spirit by which the Church of Christ should always and every-where be characterized. The interests of its members are one. Whatever one has that others have not, he owes to

* Acts v. 4.

them; and they, in turn, owe him what they have that he has not. (Read carefully 1 Cor. xii. 12–26.) We bring our gifts into a common treasury—our wealth, our knowledge, our ability to teach, to exhort, to pray, to sing, to work; and hold all this in trust for the benefit of our brethren. The fellowship is simply a *partnership* in which every one that enters puts in what capital he has of brain, or muscle, or nerve, or purse, and shares with all the rest in the profits that accrue from the partnership. This leads us to say:

3. It is a community of *labor* as well as of interest. Each partner, in that line of activity which, in the judgment of his fellows, he is best qualified to pursue, uses his gifts for the common good. It may be in prayer, or in song, or in Sunday-school work, or in managing the business affairs of the church, or in ruling, or in teaching, or in money-making and money-spending, or in acting as door-keeper in the house of God; or it may combine several of these: whatever he has that God has given him that can be used for the benefit of others, that, as a partner in this great firm, he puts into the common stock. (Read Rom. xii. 4–8.)

This suggests as another great lesson: if you would abide and grow in spiritual life, *be active in serving others*. Without this—we may as well tell you now as later—no amount of Bible-reading, or prayer, or ordinance-keeping will develop you into the symmetry and stateliness of genuine Christian character. The selfish souls that are in the church merely for their own sake, will always be dwarfs, or lean and lank deformities. That only is a true life which gives as well as receives. The Dead Sea, forever drinking up the fresh waters of the Jordan and yielding nothing in return, has bleakness and barrenness and sullenness and grime and death as the bitter fruitage. Be not like that.

Moreover, by the everlasting laws of compensation that operate throughout the universe, there is blessing only to him that blesses, happiness and rest only to him who toilsomely and sufferingly imparts them to others. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." * "Whatever a man sows, that also shall he reap." †

Paul has rescued from oblivion a precious

* Matt. vii. 2. † Gal. vi. 7.

saying from the lips of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." * And the wise man of Israel has taught us that "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." †

Nor is this to be a spasmodic activity. They continued *steadfastly* in the fellowship. Settle it, then, if you would succeed in your new life, that you must recognize the fellowship of interest and of labor that belongs to your new associations in the Church of God; and while you derive benefit from others, make it an essential part of your life to do good in return, and strengthen all your good desires and purposes by bringing them into steady *exercise*. The spirit, as well as the body, is developed by activity. It may be somewhat difficult for you to ascertain just the best sphere of activity to occupy. You will need in this the judgment of others. But at all events, determine to *do something* in which your life may be made a benefit to others, and work away through whatever

---

* Acts xx. 35. † Prov. xi. 24, 25.

discouragements may arise, until you are sure you have found your place.

Only one more hint on this subject can we take space to give. As a member of this fellowship, your success or failure is not your own merely. If you succeed in building up a true and noble life, it will be a success in the joys and blessings of which all will share. If you fail, the failure will reflect dishonor on the church, and bring grief and anguish to many hearts. In view of this intimate relation of your life to other lives, let us suggest that if you are tempted into sin, and stumble or fall by the way, do not attempt to hide it. *Go at once to the church and confess your fault*, and let them all have an opportunity to protect you from further disaster. One of the most fruitful sources of failure is found right here: pride and the fear of censure, hold men back from an avowal of their weakness and their need, just at that critical juncture when they are unable to battle alone; and the victory goes the wrong way before their brethren have an opportunity to help them. It is best to be perfectly frank in such cases. The *fellowship* of Christians makes it a duty that tempted and erring ones should let their brethren know of their

dangers, and that the spiritual should restore them in the spirit of meekness, and help them to bear their burdens. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed." * "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." †

When Israel and Amalek fought, "it came to pass that when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." When this was discovered, Aaron and Hur went to his help, and "stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun," and Israel won the victory. ‡ This was *fellowship*.

"The communion of saints" is a source of spiritual comfort and strength, if not absolutely indispensable, at least so needful that we can not afford to neglect it. Let me hope that, alike for your own good, and for the sake of doing good to others, you will highly prize your opportunities of Christian fellowship, and be able ever to say concerning the Church of God:

---

* James v. 16. † Gal. vi. 2. ‡ Ex. xvii. 9–13.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

LETTER III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Do this in remembrance of me."—LUKE xxii. 19.

THE converts in Jerusalem also continued steadfastly in the "breaking of bread." This is universally understood to refer to the Lord's Supper, as Paul styles it,* and to differ from the breaking of bread mentioned in Acts ii. 46. The latter was a daily practice, the former was on the first day of the week.† The latter was "from house to house;" the former was when they had "come together into one place," and is especially distinguished from the social meal at home.‡

Let us first gather up what the New Testament records concerning this observance.

Before our Lord's trial and crucifixion,

---

* 1 Cor. xi. 20. † Acts xx. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 20, 22.

while keeping the Jewish passover feast with his disciples, he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body given for you; this do in remembrance of me." Then he took a cup of wine, and gave thanks for it, and gave it to them, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink all ye of it." See Matt. xxvi. 26–30; Mark xiv. 22–25; Luke xxii. 19, 20.

We next learn from Acts ii. 42, that after the apostles made converts and gathered them into a congregation, they taught them to continue steadfastly in the observance of this bread-breaking. How often it was observed, we are not informed; nor is there a positive law anywhere on record, enjoining its observance at any stated times. It does not accord with the genius of this religion to rule its subjects by statutory law. Hence the *time* of its observance is given to us in *example* and not in *statute*. In Acts xx. 7, we read: "Upon the first day of the week, *when the disciples came together to break bread*, Paul preached to them." This points out the practice which, under apostolic teaching, the churches maintained:

they came together on the first day of the week to break bread. In 1 Cor. xi. 2, Paul praises the Corinthians that they kept the ordinances as he delivered them. He reproves them for their perversion of the Lord's Supper, but in verse 20 clearly intimates that when they met together in one place, the professed object was to eat the Lord's Supper. We conclude, therefore, that they came together at stated times; that their assembling was on the first day of the week; and that when they assembled, it was to "keep the ordinances" that Paul had delivered, and especially this ordinance of the Lord's Supper—for he says concerning it, "I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you."

In 1 Cor. v. 7, 8 we have an allusion to this supper: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

In chapter x. 16, of the same epistle, we have another reference to it: "The cup of

blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [the fellowship or joint participation] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we all are partakers of that one bread. . . . Ye can not drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye can not be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of demons."

Chapter xi. 26 teaches us that "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

These are the main passages in the New Testament that relate to this observance. In their light, we reach the following conclusions:

1. Our Lord himself established this feast for his own disciples, that in keeping it they might *cherish his memory*, and especially the memory of his sacrifice for their sins. Two things are implied in this: (1.) That *our Saviour loves to be remembered.* It is grateful to him to live in the hearts of his redeemed ones. (2.) *That the loving remembrance of Jesus is to be a means of comfort and strength to his disciples.* We can derive

no inspiration from the love of Jesus if we do not keep it in memory.* In his death we have the sublimest revelation of divine love and mercy, the grandest lesson of self-sacrifice, the most impressive demonstration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and through his death the mightiest demonstration of life and immortality. All the blessed inspirations of faith and hope and love emanate from the cross. By its pleadings we have been won from sin; by its power we are to be sustained in our new life. It has infinite meaning. The height and depth and length and breadth of the wisdom, love, and power here centered may be a life-long study and a life-long joy. Moreover, the love and mercy here revealed are constantly *needed;* our wants are ever fresh, and every new remembrance of the love that rescues us and the mercy that still redeems, is a fresh joy.

2. The apostles "delivered" this observance to the churches, and praised them for keeping it. It is, therefore, of perpetual obligation "until Jesus comes" again.

3. It has the force of a message of perpetual love from Christ to every one who

* 1 Cor. xv. 2.

properly observes it. "This is my body, given for *you*. This is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for *you*."

4. It exhibits the oneness and fellowship of Christians. It is the "communion," or *joint participation* of the body and blood of Christ in symbol. It exhibits the basis of that fellowship. They are "one in Christ Jesus"—objects of the same love, redeemed by the same blood, and heirs of the same inheritance. Its habitual lesson is, "Love one another, as I have loved you."

5. It publishes the death of our Saviour. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." It is a perpetual witness, not only that Jesus died, but that he died "*for our sins*." "There are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." The blood bears witness in this ordinance, as water does in the ordinance of immersion.

In refreshing the memory as to the amazing grace and love of God; in bringing the trusting spirit into solemn and loving and quiet communion with its Saviour; in cultivating the sentiment and feeling of Christian brotherhood and fellowship; and in bearing

witness constantly and faithfully to our confidence in the crucified Redeemer and our personal identification with his cause: the steadfast observance of this sacred feast is a very important means of spiritual culture.

Many young Christians fear to come to the Lord's table, because they have been taught to regard it as *a sacrament* of such solemnity that only the very good should approach it. In this they are strengthened by what Paul says of those who "eat and drink unworthily." Let me say that the *unworthiness* to which Paul refers arose from the perversion of the supper from its true design—making it a party affair and a carousal. It was this that led to his words of warning. We do not eat and drink unworthily merely because we have a sense of unworthiness; but perhaps all the more worthily on that account. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." Self-examination may lead to a deep sense of unworthiness; but if so, there is all the more reason for drawing near to our Saviour, and there should be all the deeper appreciation of the love that speaks in this ordinance. The Supper is not a sacrament, but a *memorial feast.* It is solemn, indeed; so is prayer, praise, and indeed

every religious act. It should no more lose its solemnity by frequent observance than prayer and other solemn observances. We eat daily and several times a day, *because we hunger;* and so long as hunger is ever recurring, there is no danger that eating will lose its charms. So, too, the soul hungers and thirsts for new supplies, and to the hungry soul the Lord's Supper will be ever refreshing.

On the Potomac river, the boats, in passing the tomb of Washington, always toll the bell. It is an every-day occurrence; yet we never heard it objected to on the ground that this frequency destroyed the solemnity of the act. It is a *living, perpetual* testimony of reverence for the Father of his Country—far more impressive, in its perpetual recurrence, than would be a monument of marble or brass; for the latter could only testify to the affection and reverence of the generation that reared it; the former tells of the living affection of each generation that observes it. So, too, the Lord's Supper, perpetually observed, is better than costliest monument in honor of the Saviour of mankind. It tells that he is still loved and honored—that his memory is cherished now as of old; and this

never-failing observance binds in one fellowship the redeemed of all generations.

> Saints here, and those in Jesus dead,
> But one communion make;
> All join in Christ, their living Head,
> And of his grace partake.

We therefore earnestly exhort you to be steadfast in attending to the breaking of bread. Keep your place at this feast of love. Remember with gratitude your best Friend. In silence, before the cross, examine your own heart, and confess your sins, and ask for mercy. Cultivate love for all who are redeemed by the same precious blood. Reflect on the debt of love you owe to Him who died for you, and how you can best respond to it by doing good to others. Rejoice in the privilege of standing among those who glory in the cross of Christ. And by lovingly entertaining the Saviour in your heart, learn to cherish the hope that He will remember you in the great day of his second coming, and give you a place among those who shall then be admitted to the feast of everlasting love.

LETTER IV.

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

"Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."—EPH. vi. 18.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—EPH. v. 20.

THE Jerusalem converts also continued steadfastly in prayers, and were continually "praising God." * The very first breath of the new-born child of God is a breath of prayer and praise. "Arise, and be baptized," said Ananias to Saul, "and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord.*"† "Because ye are sons," said Paul, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." ‡ Such an utterance, under such circumstances, is:

1. The language of *reverence*. It is the infant child looking up wonderingly and adoringly into the face of the great God—

* Acts ii. 42, 47. † Acts xxii. 16. ‡ Gal. iv. 6.

once so awful, but now so lovely to the reconciled heart—to worship his infinite greatness and adore the divine perfections which in Christ are all wedded to Love, and all, therefore, a source of confidence and joy to the reconciled soul.

2. The language of *gratitude*. The soul, once so sadly alienated from the life of God, but now nestling sweetly in his Fatherly embrace, is full of wonder and joy at the marvelous change, and sings with overflowing rapture of joy and love:

> "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
> That saved a wretch like me!
> I once was lost, but now am found;
> Was blind, but now I see."

3. It is also the language of *dependence*. The ransomed sinner has entered on a new life. Its paths are more or less strange. Its duties are new. Its ideal is lofty. Its law is holy. It calls to grand attainments in virtue and holiness. And he is weak, ignorant, inexperienced. The world he lives in is largely adverse to his new aims. The habits of the past, it may be, are at war with his new vocation. As the first rapture of his new experiences subsides, he awakes to the fact that the evil tendencies of his nature are only

subdued, not *destroyed*. In his conscious weakness he cries, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In sheer weakness and littleness he looks up to Him who hath called him to glory and manliness, and cries, "My Father, my God!" and craves the help he needs. These various phases of worship—adoration, praise, supplication—are all included in our idea of prayer, as set forth in the New Testament.

Prayer has another set of phases:

(1.) It is *secret*—in the closet—individual, personal prayer, in which the soul, unembarrassed by the presence of others, alone with God, is free to reveal itself in its innermost wishes, griefs, joys, hopes, needs, and throws itself unreservedly on the goodness and mercy of God for help and guidance. Concerning this, our Lord gives direction.* Our Lord himself, when passing through the conflicts and trials of earth, spent much time in secret prayer.† The apostles were also in the habit of constant prayer, as may be seen from Acts i. 13, 14, vi. 4, x. 9; Rom. i. 9; Eph. i. 16; Phil. i. 3, 4; Col. i. 3, 4, 9; 1 Thess. i. 2, 3;

* Matt. vi. 5–15. † Matt. xiv. 23; Luke vi. 12.

Philem. 4. It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of this as a means of success in spiritual life. He who loses his hold on God loses his anchorage, and is at the mercy of wind and wave.

(2.) *Social prayer.* We have an example of this in Acts i. 13, 14. From Acts ii. 46, 47, we learn that in their homes, and from house to house, at their meals, and in their social intercourse, the disciples were constantly praising God. It might be merely the members of the family, or it might be these with their guests; but the spirit of prayer and praise brooded over their homes and their social gatherings. If the young Christian has a home, let it be sanctified to God in prayer and praise. If he is the head of a family, let him lead the members of his household to God in daily worship. Simple, brief, solemn, joyful let it be; but continue in it "steadfastly." And in your social gatherings, "eat your food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God," and thus avoid the follies and perversions of fashionable social life, which are only too successful in drawing the heart away from

"the fountain of living waters" to "broken cisterns that can hold no water."*

(3.) *Public prayer in the church.* This, too, has its uses, not only in the public acknowledgment of God, but in supplying our needs. When we are weary in our own efforts, and discouraged with our best attempts, the voices of others bear to us the sympathy and strength and courage that we need. As Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, so do Christians bless and strengthen each other. Even Paul, the dauntless hero, when long shut out from Christian fellowship, and subject to numerous discouragements, felt his courage oozing out and his spirits sinking; but a delegation from the church in Rome went out to meet him, and greet him with loving eyes, and speak words of faith and hope, and bid him welcome to their city; and when he saw the brethren, "he thanked God, and took courage."† Perhaps these words tell the experience of more hearts in going to the house of prayer than any others in use: the result of their participation in the worship is, that they thank God and take courage.

---

* Jer. ii. 13. † Acts xxviii. 15.

There is another phase of worship which we must not omit to mention. It is that spontaneous uprising and outflowing of praise, or adoration, or petition, which is confined to no stated seasons of prayer, but occurs amidst the busy scenes of life—often amidst crushing cares and harassing anxieties. It is the telegraphic dispatch sent up to God from a meditative, or anxious, or grateful, or grief-burdened, or tempted heart, ejaculating its thanks, or joyfulness, or cry for help. Thus, in the midst of a discourse, Jesus cries, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."* And on another occasion, "Father, glorify thy name."† This cultivation of a constant sense of the presence of God, and this unceasing communion with him through the scenes of the day, is not only one of the best safeguards against evil, but one of the surest means of spiritual comfort and peace.

We sometimes listen to counsel designed to exalt particular kinds of prayer—closet prayer, for instance. We have no such

---

*Matt. xi. 25, 26. †John xii. 28.

counsel to give. We would not advise you to make any one thing a special reliance, but rather to use diligently *all* the means of grace divinely appointed. When it comes to mere expedients, make your choice; but as it relates to God's appointed means of spiritual culture, use them all. Let not closet prayer keep you from the prayer-meeting, nor the prayer-meeting be a substitute for the closet, nor either of them a substitute for the ordinances of the house of prayer. Rather with Paul would we say, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." "Be (anxiously) careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will guard your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus."*

If our Lord, as a man, needed to spend much time in prayer, surely no weak mortal can hope to succeed in living a true life without it. Every day has its wants, every

---

* Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 6, 7.

hour its perils; and even when we have no special burden of want or of weakness to bear before the Lord, we can still bring to Him, in the language of Southey, this perpetual offering:

> Four things which are not in Thy treasury
> I lay before Thee, Lord, with this petition:
> My nothingness, my wants,
> My sins and my contrition.

LETTER V.

DANGERS.

"Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong."
—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

I WOULD not conceal from you, my young friend, that there are *dangers* attendant on your new life. Every kind of life, indeed, under the present constitution of nature, is encompassed with dangers, and all successful life emerges from conflict with opposing forces. It need not be thought strange that spiritual life is no exception to the rule. It will be doing you good service to point out some of the perils which, sooner or later, you will be sure to encounter, for here with the earnest soul, "forewarned is forearmed."

1. One of these, and among the first to be encountered, grows out of the *inevitable subsidence of religious emotion.* It is impossible that the first rapture of the new life

should long continue. Were a traveler, after long and weary wandering in a desert, spent with fatigue and almost dying with thirst, to come suddenly upon a clear, bubbling spring, and see opening before him a beautiful landscape of hill, valley, and plain, covered with verdure, abounding in fruits and vocal with bird-songs, the first emotion would be one of "joy unspeakable;" the first sip of water would be more delicious than nectarean juice; the first food would be as angels' food; the first rest to his exhausted frame, in the cool shade, on the soft grass, would be inexpressibly exquisite. But his thirst once slaked, his hunger once appeased, his worn frame once completely rested, there could be no continuance of such rapturous experiences. He might live there year after year, and every day learn new beauties in the landscape, and discover new treasures in his possessions, and really have a much higher and deeper appreciation and enjoyment of it than in that first rapturous experience; but in the nature of things, the excitement of feeling must subside and be succeeded by an experience relatively tame. So the first experiences of the newborn soul are apt to be more or less raptur-

ous. It is a *new* life. It is in marked and blissful contrast with the anxiety, unrest, and wretchedness that preceded. It is somewhat startling in its novelties. "The peace of God that passeth all understanding" is a new and brilliant chapter of life. In the absorbing gladness and joy of this period, all other feelings are swallowed up. There is no consciousness of sin, or perhaps even of weakness. The transformation seems so complete that the exultant soul is ready to declare that no sin shall ever be allowed to stain it again. But these feelings subside, and as fast as they subside the convert is surprised and discouraged to find that much which he had supposed to be fully eradicated from his heart was only overpowered. It is still there. Old desires, old habits, old tyrannies of passion, which he thought had been cast out, root and branch, begin to reassert their presence, and something of their power. He finds that conversion has not annihilated a single passion. This is to him bewildering and disheartening, and he is in danger of abandoning his new life under the impression that he has been deceived—that he has not been converted at all.

It is all-important that experienced guides lead the young Christian through this peril. He must be made to understand himself, and especially to know that it is not faith in himself, or in his own experiences, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is to save him. He must be brought to see that conversion is not a literal new creation, but the *turning of the old nature over to a new dominion.* None of its forces have been annihilated; they have simply been turned into new channels. The advantage gained by conversion is, the power to master the passions and habits to which one was formerly enslaved. They are all there, and will seek to regain their dominion. By the new principle of faith and the new power of love, it is his to hold them in subjection and no longer allow them to reign. He will find them constantly rebellious, and they will give him much trouble. Sometimes, when he is off his guard, they will rise up in force and gain a temporary advantage, and for the time, it may be, conquer him; but it is his prerogative and his highest duty to bring them under, and learn from every such unhappy experience to watch and pray more vigilantly and earnestly. It should be

understood from the start that the Christian life is a warfare with evil—that hereunto are we called—that it is not the presence of evil, nor the assertion of its power that unchristianizes us, but the base yielding to its unhallowed dominion. Hence, Peter says to Christians, "Add to your faith *virtue*"—a military term indicating the presence of foes to be conquered, and showing the real excellence of Christian character to consist—not in the absence of evil, but in victory over it. *Virtue* is grander than *innocence*. When this is fairly understood, the young disciple, in place of vain backward longings toward the raptures of his first experience, will look bravely ahead and gird himself for noble strife.

2. Closely akin to this, is the danger of gauging the value of religion by the amount of happiness it brings us. In the large view, as comprehending time and eternity, this standard may be accepted; but in the narrow view generally taken of it, it is unworthy and selfish. The value of religion is to be tested by its power to guide us to a true manhood at whatever cost. The development of manhood often requires rugged discipline, painful experiences, and a succes-

sion of trials of faith and patience. He who would evade these for the sake of present ease, is a coward or a slave, and is not fit for the kingdom of God.

We feel it to be needful to remind you again, that in every life there is a battle for existence. It is part of the order of the universe. Religious life is no exception. We say to you, therefore, resolve on the attainment of a high manhood, and be willing to pay the full price for it. While accepting counsel and sympathy, and all lawful aids, refuse to be cuddled constantly as a helpless infant, and be not ambitious to live as an invalid or an imbecile in the house of God. Let all young disciples dare to reach after a true manhood or womanhood, and daily cry to God for "the strength to suffer and the will to serve." Much of the language we often hear from Christians indicates an unmanly desire and purpose to avoid or evade the trials and dangers of the way. It is well to guard against foolhardiness, and to pray daily, in view of the known weaknesses and treacheries of our own nature, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." But when duty calls us to posts of danger, as it surely will, then let us not

seek, like Jonah, to fly from duty, but rather, like the youthful David, rush even upon giants with boldness, confiding in the care of God, and saying, with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Let us be strong—not in ourselves, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

3. You will sometimes hear professed Christians talk of sinless perfection in a style that will discourage you, and lead you to doubt the genuineness of your own religious life. I wish to guard you against testing yourself in this way. Such are the varieties of temperament and education, such the idiosyncrasies of men, and such the vagaries of many enthusiastic religionists, that you can only be unsettled and bewildered if you attempt to gauge your religious experience by theirs. It will prove a snare and a delusion. Try yourself by the word of God. Cling to that. It is your only safe guide. When you hear even a Paul saying, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway,"* do not be dis-

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

couraged if you, too, find a bitter warfare on hand; and as long as the word of God invites you to a throne of grace, "*to obtain mercy*, and find grace to help in time of need,"* be assured that if you did not, as an erring Christian, need mercy, it would not be offered. We shall have more to say on these points in another letter.

---

* Heb. iv. 16.

LETTER VI.

DECEPTIVE VIEWS OF THE NEW LIFE.

"Be not deceived."—GAL. vi. 7.

MANY of the most serious difficulties of the young Christian spring from ignorance—especially from ignorance of his own nature and of the true nature of conversion. We must, therefore, ask your attention to several considerations which are closely linked with the thoughts presented in our last letter.

We wrote in that letter of the peril attending the subsidence of religious emotions —the danger of misinterpreting this apparent loss of religious feeling. We say *apparent* loss, for it is not necessarily a real loss of feeling; it may and ought to be an adjustment of our feelings to our new condition—a transition from the violence or exuberance of a new-born joy to the settled peace and happiness of a permanent life. There may

be really an increase of emotional enjoyment—the growth of religious feeling into something much deeper and higher than the first gush of joy; but there is not the same sense of *newness,* nor is it all concentrated into one blissful experience; it permeates the whole life—if less vivid, still in fact deeper and stronger than in that first notable experience. We can not be in ecstasies over the sunlight all the day long and every day, as we are for a moment when a long, dark night is gone and we hail the first glories of the morning; yet there may be richer experiences of the comfort of the sunbeams, and a deeper appreciation of their blessedness, through all the hours of the day. It is the regular pulsation of an abiding gladness, rather than the feverish flush of a momentary rapture. Let us not be understood, then, as depreciating the value of religious emotion, or as counseling against its cultivation. On the contrary, "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" are the permanent treasures of the kingdom of God, to be sought after and clung to with all tenacity of desire and purpose. "The peace that passeth all understanding," and the "joy unspeakable and full of glory," ought to be the

abiding possessions of the Christian, and they ought to increase and abound from year to year. But they soon come to have the soberness of steady life instead of the intense and all-absorbing rapture of a new experience; and they not only do not forbid a consciousness of the presence of antagonisms in our nature, but really make us more keenly and painfully sensible of the presence and power of a counter-current of earthliness and sinfulness which makes of life a continual warfare. For this very reason it becomes important that we cultivate and foster all pure religious feelings, and "keep the heart with all diligence." Only let no one be discouraged because what seemed to be the uninterrupted flow of joy and peace in the newborn soul is succeeded by the discovery of counter-currents of doubt and fear and sinfulness. They were there all the time. We lost consciousness of them in the supreme interest in spiritual things to which we were lifted—in the surprising charms of a new life. As this extraordinary emotion settles into a steady and permanent peace, we become again conscious of opposing elements in our nature which had only been overpowered, not destroyed.

Perhaps we can make our meaning plainer by an illustration. At this season of the year* there is a new and gay outburst of life. Nature spreads a new carpet over hill-side and valley, of living green, enameled with flowers of every hue; and seems to exhaust herself in devices of beauty and grandeur of incalculable variety and unapproachable perfection. Every-where the green leaf, the bursting bud, the laughing blossom, exult in the glories of a new creation, and a thrill of new life over hill and dale wakes myriad voices of song; the great temple of nature is vocal with praise, fragrant with incense, and filled with the glory of God. It is a marvelous change from wintry desolation; the wail of wintry winds gives place to joyfulest melodies. But concerning this new outburst of life, note several things:

1. No literally new life has been imparted. All the elements of this life existed before. But the earth stood, as it were, in an alienated position, where heavenly influences could not penetrate its heart. The sun was just as powerful in midwinter as now, and just as ready to bless; but the earth held

*Written in April, 1876.

off and would not receive it. And the earth had the same capacities for life in midwinter as now, but they were unawakened. *The earth has come into a new position to the sun,* where the sunbeams fall more directly upon it, and strike with directer power, bearing their message of love from heaven to a heart that now opens to receive it and responds to it in all this joyous outbreak of life and beauty. There has been no addition to the faculties of nature—no annihilation of any of her old forces.

Just so, the elements of spiritual life and the capacity for spiritual development were in human nature before conversion. No new faculty has been added in conversion; no old faculty or force has been annihilated. *The soul has turned to God.* The beams of truth and love from heaven penetrate the heart which, in its former state of alienation, was ice-bound and desolate. The seeds of divine knowledge and grace, long since planted, it may be, germinate; the frozen currents of life are thawed in the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness; every slumbering energy and capacity of life starts into new activity; and the soul that was "dead in trespasses and sins," and spirit-

ually desolate, begins to put forth buds that swell and burst into blossoms of beauty and of hope. There are the same faculties and forces of nature as aforetime, but they have come under *directer heavenly influences*—are controlled by a new power, and obtain a new development.

2. But, gay and exultant as it is, the life of the Spring-time is not complete. The change from Winter's dreariness gives it a peculiar charm, and it has a gladness of its own which no other season can imitate; yet it is a life of *promise* only—it is not complete in itself. If we get not beyond blossoms, this new life will be of little worth. Soon the blossoms will fade, and the exuberance and gayety that we now behold will be exchanged for the more decorous and sober life-development of the Summer-time. Is the life of the Summer less real because less gay or less joyous than that of the Spring? Must we doubt the genuineness of the life because its blossoms have departed? or, because the constant succession of bright days leaves a less vivid impression than the change from Winter to Spring, is it therefore less desirable? Surely not. On the contrary, the earth is all the time coming more fully under

the power of the sun, and drinking in larger streams of life, and thrilling with deeper energy of life-giving and life-sustaining power. But Summer's work is grave and earnest. Nature can not afford to be always in a holiday dress. It was well to have a gala day at the opening of Spring, and initiate a new era with gleesome celebrations. But henceforth the new life takes on a soberer visage and summons all its forces to turn the gay blossoms into solid fruit. To form and ripen fruit is not mere play. It calls for the diligent employment of all life-forces to fulfill the blossom's glad prophecy, and to resist the power of adverse forces that stand ever on the alert to prey upon this unfolding life.

So the blossom of conversion is most precious as a prophecy of sanctification. Conversion is *blossom*—precious blossom, truly; joyful, earnest, beautiful blossom; yet only the blossom of the soul. "Herein is my Father glorified"—not that ye bear many beautiful blossoms, but—"that ye bear *much fruit*." Fruit-bearing is a serious business. The soul must draw nearer to God than in conversion, and receive directer communications of power from on high, and be able, by

increase of power, to resist the opposing influences of sin and sense. The Summer has a deeper, stronger life than the Spring.

3. That the promise of the Spring may be fulfilled, there must be constant vigilance and labor. In addition to all the gracious heavens may do, there is a human side to this question, and human hands and hearts must be busy if they would reap the rich fruits of God's goodness. The soil must be mellowed and fed, and the tree or plant must be guarded against its numerous foes. In times of drouth it must be watered. Every friendly office must be performed in its behalf that will tend to foster life and promote its development. Otherwise, no fruit comes to perfection.

And this is just as true in grace as in nature—just as true of a soul as of a tree. There is a human work to be done in soul-culture, without which a proper fruitage can never be realized. This leads us to say:

4. In running these analogies between nature and grace, one important distinction must ever be kept in mind: *the plants and trees are passive*—man is *active*. They act only as they are acted on; he acts by virtue of a liberty with which God has endowed

him in his rational nature, and can help himself. Unless some other hand comes to the rescue of the tree, it may be the helpless victim of its foes. It is not at its own election to bear fruit or to doom itself to barrenness. But it is at once the glory and the peril of human nature, that it is to choose for itself and act for itself. If the soil in which the tree stands is exhausted, the tree has no power of renewing it. But if the human heart is in need of fresh supplies of wisdom and grace, it is its own guilt if these supplies are not obtained. Left to ourselves, without God's truth and grace, we are helpless and must perish. But when God supplies the means of spiritual growth and fruitfulness, we are not helpless. We not only have power to appropriate them, but unless we do appropriate them, each one for himself, we can not grow in grace or in knowledge. There are few more fatal errors than that which persuades the young Christian to passiveness—which leads him to regard religion as something that heaven will pour in on his soul at stated times, while he looks, and listens and waits for the desired blessing. Not thus do the Scriptures teach us the way to success in religious life. True,

they promise that God shall work in us to will and to do according to his own good pleasure, but only as we ourselves work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. True, they promise that God shall draw nigh to us, but only as we draw nigh to him. True, they promise that God will give his Holy Spirit, but only to them that obey him. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. *If any man hear my voice, and open the door*, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me."* "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and he shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." †

Such is the uniform teaching of Jesus. It makes plain the way of success. We say, therefore, again, Do not attempt to live on your first acquisitions. Be not content with blossoms, nor wish for the Spring-time always to last. Seek for fruit. Labor for fruit. Diligently cultivate and guard the life that opens with so much promise. You will find in the mellow fruits of righteousness a completer joy than in the blossoms of conversion.

---

* Rev. iii. 20. † John xiv. 21–23.

5. Let us add that Nature herself sometimes seems to turn against her own offspring. Frosts, tempests, drouths, come with blighting and desolating power, and all the beauty and bloom of the Spring-time wither at their touch. Human power and skill are impotent to avert the calamity. It looks as if some capricious power ruled over all, delighting to kindle hopes only to quench them, and to start life only to crush it. But this is a narrow and shallow view. A larger view discovers compensations for all this, and learns that these apparent calamities are but a healthful discipline, schooling Nature's forces into greater vigor, and resulting ultimately in greater fruitfulness.

And thus, in spiritual life, "the chastenings of the Lord" are often severe, and the Christian is subjected to trials and disappointments which sometimes cause him to think that God has forsaken him. Nothing more perplexes the faith of the Christian than these apparently undeserved sufferings. But "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And although "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, yet afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of

righteousness in them that are exercised thereby."*

I have written you an unusually long letter, but the importance of removing the mystery which, in the popular mind, pervades the subject treated of, must be my apology. Nor am I yet done with this grave subject of the *dangers* attendant on Christian life. But I have written quite enough for one letter.

---

* Heb. xii. 6, 11.

LETTER VII.

TEMPTATION.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."—JAMES i. 12.

NO character is really trustworthy until it is severely tested. Men may sustain for many years a reputation for virtue and religious integrity to which they are not entitled, on the purely negative ground that nothing to the contrary appears against them. But the truth is, they have never been *tried*. Not until the hour of sore temptation comes will it be known whether they are positively good and true. The public have been startled many times within the last few years by what has been styled the *fall* of men occupying eminent positions; but it is doubtful whether, in most of these cases, there was much of a fall. Their eminence was factitious and fictitious. In private and obscure life they revealed no lack of integrity, because they were not *tempted*

to dishonesty. Placed in new positions, where they were severely tested by temptations to dishonest and corrupt practices, they proved unworthy, and the revelation of their unworthiness is styled a *fall;* when, in fact, it is simply a revelation of weakness before concealed from view. This lack of integrity may affect some particular point in a character otherwise good, but when tested, may involve the whole character in ruin. A bridge may have but one weak place in it; but a yielding at that point when the test-pressure comes, may wreck the whole structure. A defect in a single axle may wreck a whole train of cars: nay, just one unsound rail in a stretch of a thousand miles, all else being perfectly sound, may suffice to accomplish the work of destruction. One flaw in a steam boiler, one leak in a vessel, may be sufficient to destroy it, unless proper tests reveal the defect and suggest the remedy. So is it in respect to character. In a very important sense, a man is no stronger than the weakest place in his nature. For trustworthiness, he must be tried at that point, and abide the test, or be rejected. How many strong and glorious natures have been utterly wrecked by the one

vice of intemperance! How many, otherwise noble, have been ruined by pride! How many splendid elements of character have been rendered worse than useless by avarice! How we need to know ourselves—to learn the lurking treacheries of our own hearts—the dangers that lie concealed in yet untried and undeveloped tendencies of our nature! Yes, we need to be tried, and to be tried "in all points," alike for the detection of weakness and treacherous tendencies, and for the development of latent virtues that are only called forth in battling with temptation. Hence says an apostle, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for *when he is tried* he shall receive the crown of life." And another apostle testifies in a similar strain: "We glory in tribulation also—knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience *approval*, and approval hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given to us."*

In view of such considerations as we have suggested, the young disciple should not shrink from trials, but rather welcome them

* Rom. v. 3–5.

as necessary to his growth into Christian manhood and his preparation for the royal honors and dignities of the world to come. Come they will—sometimes in the form of direct temptation to evil, sometimes in the form of afflictions and calamities which themselves become sources of temptation. With a nature which, notwithstanding conversion, is yet responsive to appeals from a world that teems with bewildering and seductive influences, he is called to remain *in* the world and not be *of* it; to train his spirit for heavenly blessedness on the battle-fields of earth, in constant warfare with "the world, the flesh, and the devil;" and he must learn to "fight the good fight of faith," and thus "lay hold on eternal life," "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

It is surely a significant fact that our Lord, immediately after his baptism, was led into a wilderness to be tempted of the devil. We can not regard it as simply an incident in his individual life. He was the champion of humanity. "In all things it behooved him to be made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make recon-

ciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."* This gives peculiar interest to that wonderful conflict with Satan. It is not merely a curious piece of history. It is a grand and awful duel between the champions of hostile forces, in which our glorious Leader, in behalf of all whom he represents, bares himself to every attack to which they are exposed; while his desperate foe exhausts his skill in his assaults on human nature, well knowing that if he can work Christ's overthrow, it will be the overthrow of the race. No portion of Scripture deserves more careful and anxious study—for here the ripest tactics of evil are employed, and here the means of certain triumph over temptation are exhibited. We can do no more, in this letter, than mention the points in the narrative that call for special attention.

1. Satan came to our Lord when he was in extreme need—when his craving for food was most intense, and when, in the clamor of the appeals of appetite, the voice of rea-

* Heb. ii. 17, 18.

son was least likely to be heard.* The temptation was addressed to the desire then dominant in his nature—the desire most easy to yield to, most difficult to be resisted. Evermore some such ruling desire, almost unconquerable in its pleadings, exposes us to danger.

2. The suggestion offered was apparently harmless. It recommended nothing that was sinful *in itself.* It was not a temptation to crime at which a pure nature would be sure to revolt, but the suggestion of an expedient that was only evil *as coming from an evil source.* It was intended to be an entering wedge. Acceptance of it would have been submission to a lawless power, and an opening of the heart for worse suggestions sure to follow. We must ever look at the *source* of that which is recommended to us. From an evil source, even that which is apparently harmless is to be rejected. The door must be shut unceremoniously in the face of even the most plausible suggestions that come to us from evil or even from doubtful sources. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

---

*Matt. iv. 1–3.

3. It was an adroit suggestion, designed to excite distrust, or to challenge to rash action. "*If* thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." "The Son of God—and starving! You can not be the Son of God, without the power to relieve yourself." If this had led to distrust of his own relationship as the Son of God, or if it had excited to the proposed deed with a view to silence the taunt, in either case, the temptation would have been successful; it would have been a triumph of Satanic suggestion—a bending of the integrity of the tempted one. How often the young Christian is plied with temptations of this class!

4. The temptation failed, because Jesus *would hold no parley with the tempter.* He planted himself on the word of God. "*It is written,* Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every thing that God appoints." If "bread alone" would meet the wants of our nature, we could dispense with all spiritual culture, and be content to remain on the low plane of animal life. But better starvation, with all its horrors, than to yield the spirit to Satanic power.

This *supreme reliance on the word of God*

is our sure refuge from the subtlest temptations. There are times when to pause for a parley is sure destruction. The sophistries of passion are often such that even vice and crime are made to appear justifiable. The voice of God alone breaks the charm. His word is the only certain refuge of the soul.

5. When temptation failed at one point, the next effort was to assail human nature at an opposite point. Jesus would not yield to *distrust*—he must be tempted to *presumption*. "If you have such confidence in God as to attempt to live without eating, then show your trust in him by casting yourself down from this giddy height. Surely he will keep you from harm, for *it is written*, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee," etc.* Thus it is that in our very triumph and security there is danger of overthrow. *The sudden sweep of our nature from one extreme to another* is always dangerous. Bold adventures into danger, into evil associations, and foolhardy displays of strength and courage in battling with dangers when duty does not call us, are apt to result disastrously. While it is manly to grapple

* Matt. iv. 5, 6.

strong foes *when duty calls us to the post of danger*, and we may confidently expect strength from God to win in the contest; it is madness, in view of our weakness and the traitors in our own hearts, to risk ourselves needlessly in dangerous places, or attempt vainglorious displays of moral strength. Even false interpretations of Scripture may be suggested to encourage us to such recklessness; and we shall be saved, not by any magical power attending the mere utterance of the words of Scripture, but by a correct knowledge of the *meaning* of Scripture, a clear understanding of the *will* of God. We have no surplus strength to spare for useless displays of bravery.

6. Then a sudden *charge* is made all along the line of appetite and passion. The pleasures and riches and honors of the world—"the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"—charm succeeding charm in the panoramic unfolding, until the love of ease, the love of sensual pleasure, the love of riches, the love of power, the love of fame, and all desires that earthly charms can awaken, are aroused and stormed by the brilliant and fascinating display; and when the gazer is supposed to be thoroughly bewildered and

intoxicated, the voice of the tempter steals into his soul in softest accents, "All these will I give thee *if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" To linger here is death. Alas! alas! the myriads that have lingered and gazed and listened until the spell was fastened on them, and the knee was bent in shameful and fatal homage to the evil one for the poor privilege of grasping a shadow —for the low delight of clutching a perishable treasure; and the glorious birthright to immortal joys was surrendered for a mess of pottage! "Get thee behind me, Satan," is the only safety—the quick, prompt, stern, indignant repulse that allows of no parley, but puts the unworthy suggestion under foot, and plucks out the eye that insists on gazing at the unlawful prize.

God's great men are one-eyed, one-handed, one-footed, and covered with the scars of battle. The sleek, smooth, handsome, well-preserved men who know nothing of the "good fight of faith," will have no place among the "called and chosen and faithful," in the great day of reward.*

We have no space to elaborate these

* Matt. v. 29, 30.

thoughts. We write rather to excite thought in you than to do your thinking for you. Ponder well these suggestions, and learn from the Master how to conquer the fiercest temptations.

When the struggle was over, "angels came and ministered unto him." Angel-visits are made to heroic, struggling spirits, on rugged battle-fields—not in the soft scenes of self-indulgence to indolent, ignoble cowardly souls. "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him." On the mount of temptation—in the garden of agony—in the dark sepulcher—the bright angels of God were found, and heavenly aid came to the brave heart that shrunk not from the strife with evil. And thus it will ever be.

LETTER VIII.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God."—I. JOHN iii. 1.

IT is important, dearly beloved, that you should understand the spiritual relationships into which you have been introduced. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."* "Formerly ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light."† "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."‡ To be "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," is the highest honor that created beings can enjoy. In point of rank, there is nothing superior to it this side the throne of

---

* Eph. ii. 19. † Eph. v. 8. ‡ Gal. iii. 26, 27.

the Uncreated. Hence, although of all born of women none was greater than John the Baptist, our Lord declares, "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." No merely *official* relationship can equal the *spiritual* relationship of a child of God. To realize that we are indeed children of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord to all the dignities and riches and glories of the everlasting kingdom, is a bliss and a joy beyond all that words can express. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!" There are certain considerations suggested by this relationship, which it is our present purpose to point out:

1. If God is our Father in the high spiritual sense in which the New Testament employs the term, then we are the objects of His love and care. His fatherly compassion and love are never withdrawn from us. He is ever watching over us for our spiritual good, and leading us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil; for He will be with us; His rod and staff will comfort us. He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor

forsake thee;" so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me."* This child-like trust in God—this hiding under His wing—this casting all our care on Him, assured that He careth for us—is not only authorized by the relation into which we have come as His children, but it would be exceedingly dishonorable on our part to fail thus to confide in Him. This is a faith which should be constantly cultivated and kept in continual exercise.

2. If God is our Father, we should be like him—as obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance; but as He who hath called us is holy, so should we be holy in all manner of conduct. We should be "followers of God, as dear children."† This leads us to say that our aim, in respect to character, should be high. We should seek after *god-likeness*. The fact that we are as yet weak and erring should not prevent this. If we are content to think that we can not help sinning, we shall never make the effort to be free from sin; but if we aspire to holiness, and

* Heb. xiii. 5, 6. † Eph. v. 1, 2.

that, too, under a deep sense of our weakness and need of God's help, we shall surely make progress in that direction, and grow more and more into the image of Him whom we love.

3. If God is our Father, we must seek to preserve the honor of the divine family into which we have come, and guard against compromising it by unworthy associations. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." * This is very plain and very positive. God only promises to be a Father to those who

*2 Cor. vi. 14–18.

separate themselves from all that is unbelieving and iniquitous.

4. If God is our Father, we must accept the discipline of his fatherly hand. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."* We must not nurse the thought, when afflictions and troubles come, that God has forsaken us, or that there is no profit in serving him; but rather look on the evils that befall us as the wise chastenings of a loving hand, designed to correct us and lift us into purer and nobler life. Thus we shall be able to rejoice even in tribulations, and carry with

* Heb. xii. 6–10.

us the cheerful faith that "all things"—prosperous and adverse—"work together for good to them that love God." If our religion is of any value to us, it ought to be especially valuable in ministering comfort and strength in seasons of sorrow, distress and weakness. It can only be thus efficacious as we come to understand its gracious provisions, and learn its high designs to educate us for an immortal destiny—making every thing in this life subservient to that great end. The soul that has properly learned the heights and depths of love and pity comprehended in the Fatherhood of God, has an unfailing fountain of peace and joy.

5. If God is our Father, we should be filled with his Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." * "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." † "Now he who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." ‡ This accords with the promise made to inquirers on the day

---

* Rom. viii. 16. †Gal. iv. 6. ‡2 Cor. i. 21, 22; v. 5.

of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, upon the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." * The evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is not to be sought in *physical* manifestations, but in our moral and spiritual state—in filial reverence and confidence, in the strength to conquer sin, and in that love, joy, peace, etc., which are the legitimate fruits of the Spirit. † This divine Comforter and Strengthener is our promised help in the conflicts to which we are called—the sure pledge of the heavenly inheritance. It is right for God's children to pray for the Holy Spirit; for "if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" ‡

6. Finally, if God is our Father, eternal life is ours. Because He lives, we shall live also. We are His heirs. Heaven is our home. We are but strangers and pilgrims here. And while we may lawfully enjoy all that is bright, and pure, and good that be-

---

* Acts ii. 38. † Gal. v. 22–26. ‡ Luke xi. 13.

longs to earth, and make the scenes through which we journey vocal with our songs of gladness, we can only bestow a pilgrim's passing notice and transient admiration on even the brightest of the scenes of earth; for we are strangers in a strange land, journeying to the land of which the Lord hath said, "I will give it to thee." Thus we shall be able to sing:

"A sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I am nearer my home to-day
Than ever I've been before;
Nearer the bounds of life,
Where I lay my burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown."

We shall thus be kept from "entangling alliances" with evil, and from enslavement to the follies and vices of the world, for "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as God is pure."*

We earnestly exhort all young disciples to meditate on these things.

---

* 1 John iii. 3.

LETTER IX.

VIGILANCE.

"Be sober, be vigilant."—1 Pet. v. 8.

IT has passed into a proverb that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." This is certainly true of spiritual liberty. Foes without and within stand ready to capture the soul in its first unguarded moment. A calamitous accident of recent occurrence in this city* furnishes an impressive lesson on this point. The celebrated painting of Dubufe—The Prodigal Son—was on exhibition. Gas-jets ran along the stage beneath the picture, in close proximity to it, to give effect to the night exhibition. These jets had just been lighted, when probably an extra pressure on one of the foot-lights brought the flame into contact with the drapery about the painting, and in a few moments this great work of art was ruined. It had re-

* Cincinnati, Ohio, May 26, 1876.

ceived many years of patient labor, and the author had lavished on it all his genius and skill, intending it to be his masterpiece and his monument. It had been purchased at a cost of $30,000, and was estimated to be worth twice that sum. In one moment, by too close association with a destructive element, this magnificent product of rich genius and patient toil was in ruins.

Is there not a lesson here? The formation of character is a life-work. Grander than the work of the artist on the canvas is the work of the Christian—who is a life-artist—in the production of a true life. It is the prodigal son transformed into a stately, symmetrical and noble Christian, robed in righteousness, crowned with holiness, enthroned on the truth as it is in Jesus, and bearing in his hand the scepter of dominion over the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the anxious and toilsome work of many years—often marred by blunders which it is difficult to correct, and constantly lacking in harmonious blending of light and shade. Much has to be blotted out and worked over again. Fixed purpose, holy enthusiasm, and patience almost divine, are needed to bring it to perfection. Once completed, it is "a

thing of beauty and a joy forever." Perhaps even the unfallen, as they are led through the "many mansions" of the redeemed, to learn new and wondrous lessons of the transforming power of the grace of God, will linger over such a picture with rapt attention, and trace admiringly the lineaments of character so carefully and skillfully wrought by the inspirations of Divine wisdom and love, and the rich adornments so delicately and beautifully penciled by a spiritual Bezaleel, filled with the Spirit of God.

But what we especially desire to impress on you as a spiritual artist engaged in such work, is, that *the elements of destruction are in close proximity to your work*, and one careless moment may result in the loss of the anxious labor of many years. One unholy impulse—one fierce blaze of passion—may kindle upon it and utterly consume it. The work of destruction is easy. It requires no high order of genius to accomplish it. The hand of an idiot may deface or destroy, in an hour, what only lofty genius, and supreme skill, and the patient toil of a life-time had created. Remember, then, it is not enough to be diligent in work-

ing to build a true life; we must also *watch* evermore against the lurking foes that would despoil our labor and ruin our hopes. "What I say unto you, I say unto all: *Watch.*"

LETTER X.

EARNESTNESS.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate."—LUKE xiii. 24.

LET it be impressed on your mind that there is no possibility of success in Christian life without *earnestness*. It is a mischievous perversion of the precious teaching of the gospel concerning salvation by grace without works of the law, when it is made to imply *passivity*, as the one thing needful on our part, in order to magnify the grace that saves us. We are, indeed, saved "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to God's mercy;" for "works of righteousness," in the Scripture sense, are perfect works that constitute us righteous—faultless obedience to the law of righteousness. As *such* an obedience can not be rendered, it is impossible that we can be thus justified. If saved at all, it must be by grace, and not by law. But sal-

vation by grace does not exclude *obedience;* on the contrary, it requires such obedience as we are able to render. Salvation has in it the idea of a quickening of all our powers into high activity—our enlistment in a *service* in which every ransomed energy of our being shall be earnestly devoted to the will of God. Salvation is not the transfer of an idle and stagnant nature from a state of condemnation to a state of justification. It is rather the *turning* of the powers that are actively employed in sin to active employment in righteousness, and the intensifying of all these converted energies in the service of righteousness by the Spirit of God. "But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."* The legitimate working of the grace of God results in a hate of sin, a love of holiness, and earnestness of purpose to escape from the one and attain to the other. It is not the intention of grace to override or violate the laws of mind, but to operate in harmony with these for the attainment of the noblest ends. Hence, even where miracles were

---

*Rom. vi. 22.

performed, in which the bodies wrought on were largely the passive subjects of a resistless power, there was ever a solicitude to avoid involving the *mind* in the same passivity. The man with the withered hand was commanded to stretch forth his hand—not that he could do it, but that rousing his *will* into *strenuous* effort, he might receive the strength to perform the act when he was *striving* to obey.* The diseased woman was not healed until, rousing her weary and worn frame into desperate action, she made her way through the crowd and touched the fringe of the Healer's robe. † The helpless cripple who had been *carried* for years to the beautiful gate of the temple, was commanded, "Rise, and walk;" and not until he made the exertion—rousing all his energies in a desperate effort, did his feet and ankle bones receive strength. ‡ There is meaning in this. If, even in miracles wrought on the bodies of men, there is a divine carefulness to rouse men to all possible self-exertion, we may be sure that in conversion, which is not a miracle, but a change wrought through the natural channels of the mind,

---

* Mark iii. 1–5. † Matt. ix. 20–22. ‡ Acts iii. 2–8.

and in strict harmony with the laws of mind; and in which, the change being wrought on mind and not on matter, the idea of naked omnipotence is excluded: in such a change we may be sure that the blessing will not be gained by any exercise of divine power without the concurrent exercise of our own powers. Hence the invitation of grace is, "*Come* unto me." "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." As in conversion, so in sanctification; there is no growth in grace without an earnest forthputting of effort on our part.

It is observable that all our Saviour's instructions on these points imply that the blessings of grace are attainable only by earnest effort. "*Strive*—agonize—to enter in at the strait gate." The allusion is to wrestling matches — the intensely earnest *struggle* for victory. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the *violent* take it *by storm*." The allusion is to a fierce military onset. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchantman *seeking* goodly pearls"— the eager pursuit of wealth. And in harmony with this is Paul's teaching: "This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and *reaching out* to the things which

are before, I *press* toward the mark." The allusion is to the eager contest in a race. Look at the leading terms in our Lord's directions to his disciples, when pointing out the path of success: Ask—seek—knock—strive—fight—run. There is no room here for even a thought of idleness, indifference, or passiveness.

If we would succeed in any undertaking, our earnestness must be in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome. In spiritual life these difficulties are many and great. We are to acquire the treasures of knowledge and wisdom. This is a toilsome task. Truth is only won through diligent, persistent and devoted wooing. "If thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; if thou *seekest* her as silver, and *searchest* for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." As well expect gold and silver to rain down from heaven, or come forth from the mine, refined and minted, and travel to your coffers, without effort of yours, as to expect to be blessed with the divine treasures of wisdom and knowledge without patient and persevering toil.

Then there are old habits to be overcome, and new virtues and graces to be cultivated. It is very difficult to lift one's life out of the deep ruts in which it has always traveled. The tyranny of habit is strong. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are *accustomed* to do evil."* By the grace of God it may be done; but even with divine aid, it calls for earnestness of effort on our own part.

Then to take on *new* habits; to plant one's life on new principles and shape it in harmony with those principles, evermore confronted by the power of former habitudes, and under strong temptations to lapse into the ways that habit had made easy: without deep and thorough earnestness this can not be accomplished. It calls for the supreme might of a will that has been energized by the Spirit of God. The price of liberty here is heroic endeavor.

Again: earnestness should be in proportion to the greatness of the interests at stake. To be dreadfully in earnest over trifles is the characteristic of a diminutive or an insane

---

* Jer. xiii. 23.

mind. And to be indifferent in the presence of great issues, is equally so. A true man can not stand unconcerned when great principles are at stake, or great interests are in peril. Especially where the interests of eternity are involved—the peace, honor and dignity of human nature, in the highest and deepest sense of these terms—it becomes a crime against one's own nature, and against God, to look idly on and "care for none of these things." That which stirred the heart of the Infinite, brought the Son of God to the manger, the cross and the grave, and fills heaven and hell with eager desire, man can not treat slightingly without incurring dishonor and guiltiness. A cold heart, a thoughtless mind, a supine spirit, in the presence of the mighty contest between heaven and hell, light and darkness, sin and righteousness, life and death—a contest that involves every thing that should be dear to the heart of man—is an insult to God and a deep disgrace to human nature. The tears and blood of the dying Son of God cry out against it. The mourning heavens and rending graves and rifted rocks protest against it. Hell itself, stirred to its awful depths with rage and despair, condemns it. Shall man—for

whom heaven pours out all its treasures of love, against whom hell awakes all infernal powers—alone be unconcerned, flintier in heart than the rocks, more dumb than death? Surely, we can not but recognize the sin, the crime of indifference to these great interests. Even our highest enthusiasm, our deepest earnestness, must seem weak and tame in view of all that is involved in the ever-raging conflict between right and wrong.

We therefore urge you to guard against every tendency in the direction of indifference, and to cultivate constantly earnestness of soul. To this end, dwell on the greatness and preciousness of the spiritual interests embraced in the religion of Jesus; seek to understand and appreciate the perils that beset your path; and familiarize your mind with the thought, until it becomes a thorough conviction, that only the earnest soul can win the victory over sin and death.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel after he had wrestled all night with the angel of God, and, at break of day, when almost exhausted, still persevered in the struggle, saying, "I will not let thee go until thou bless me."*

---

* Gen. xxxii. 24–28.

He was crowned with princely dignities, because as a prince he had power with God and prevailed. There is no way to the dignity of a true spiritual Israelite but that of wrestling. He who would have power with God must win his way to it by unconquerable heroism.

"The heat, the dust upon our brow,
Signs of the contest, we may wear;
Yet thus we shall appear more fair
In our Almighty Master's eye
Than if, in fear to lose the bloom,
Or ruffle the soul's lightest plume,
We from the strife should fly.

"And for the rest, in weariness,
In disappointment, or distress,
When strength decays or hope grows dim,
We ever may recur to Him
Who has the golden oil divine
Wherewith to feed our failing urns—
Who watches every lamp that burns
Before his sacred shrine."*

* Archbishop Trench.

LETTER XI.

DECISION OF CHARACTER.

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."—JAMES i. 8.

WE must not omit to speak a few words of counsel touching the question of *decision of character.* The earnestness of which we last wrote is an important element in a decided character; yet earnestness may be found in very different associations. We have four distinctly marked classes of character:

1. *The passive.* Those who unresistingly receive whatever influences are brought to bear on them, and are just what the reigning influences of the hour may make them. They are like dough—capable of being kneaded and molded into any shape whatever. They can hardly be said to be good or bad—scarcely more so than the clay in the hands of the potter. Such persons need to be placed under guardians; they are moral and

spiritual imbeciles, and should be treated as such.

2. *The impulsive.* Those who are swayed by impulse more than by reason, and are good or bad according to the nature of the impulses that sway them. These are very inconsistent, but they are by no means the worst characters. They are at least frank and honest, however unsteady; and, with all their provoking irregularities, are highly virtuous in comparison with the cool, calculating, deliberate hypocrite, who, with oily tongue and sanctimonious look and affected humility, has yet seven abominations in his heart.

3. *The bigoted.* These are stubborn, mulish, and unchangeable, for no reason whatever but simply because they will to have it so. They know it's so because—they know it's so. Their nature is of just such a capacity, incapable of growth or expansion. It will hold a gill, or a pint it may be—just that and no more. Another drop will cause it to run over. Nothing so maddens them as an attempt to go beyond the limits they have set to truth, and nothing so increases the tenacity with which they cling to their pet notions as to have them proved to be false.

These are the men that eternally sneer at progress, and whose unceasing inquiry is, Why were the former days better than these?

When we speak of *decided men*, we have in mind a type of character altogether different from these. It is firm, unyielding; but it is so *for a reason*. No line of conduct is marked out, no principles of action are accepted, no convictions of truth are allowed to be settled, until the ground has been carefully explored, and the reasons, *pro* and *con*, scrupulously weighed. Hence, no path of life is entered on until a conclusion has been soberly reached that it is the true path. Men who thus decide are not apt to change. If ever they change, it is likely to be a deep, radical change—a revolution growing out of a reëxamination of their premises and the entrance of new light into their investigations. Such a change will not be easily made. It must be compelled by the sheer force of truth; and when it comes will be thorough and permanent. They are open to conviction, but only to conviction; and the same steadiness of purpose and loyalty to truth that make them slow to abandon what they have long cherished, will make them firm and fervent in their attachment

to the new convictions which truth compels them to accept.

Now, in religious life, there is great need of this decision of character. There is much within us and without us that is opposed to a steady spiritual life. The Christian's life is a life of *faith*. He rests in the invisible. The truths in which he rejoices belong to the spiritual realm, and are incapable of mathematical or physical demonstration. They are truths which commend themselves to the *conscience*, and furnish their highest evidences only to the pure in heart. "To the upright there ariseth light in darkness." * "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." † "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God." ‡ Very easily, then, may the voice of selfish passion clamor against these truths as unreasonable, and the sensuous man call them in question as incapable of demonstration. "The animal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." § We are so enveloped in materialism, so accustomed to deal with the sensuous, and are so unfamiliar with the sublime, but invisible realities of

---

* Ps. cxii. 4. † Ps. xxv. 14. ‡ John vii. 17. § 1 Cor. ii. 14.

the spiritual universe, that we are constantly exposed to assaults on our faith from the realms of the visible, and to the overpowering witcheries of sin and sense, until either doubt withers our convictions, or impulse blinds us to the charms of the unseen world. To make one's way through such a world of snares and pitfalls—to navigate such a treacherous sea, deaf to the song of sirens, blind to the false lights of wreckers, fearless of contrary winds and currents, and, with eyes steadily fixed on pole-star, and compass, and chart, to sail right over untried waters to an unseen port, is given only to the man of *one mind*, whose convictions are too deeply rooted to be changed by every wind of doctrine.

Many times, too, there are such perplexing providences, such mysterious and discouraging combinations of opposing influences, that we are ready to say with Jacob, "All these things are against me." And it requires a deep and high faith to be able to say, with Job, when midnight darkness envelops us, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* Such a persistent, triumph-

---

*Job xiii. 15.

ant confidence is the ripe fruit of convictions intelligently accepted and faithfully cherished.

What we call decision of character is in part a natural endowment. That is to say, some men are by nature firm and unyielding, others weak and wavering. Some are naturally credulous, others skeptical. There is, therefore, a wide difference among men as to the difficulties to be conquered in the formation of such a character. Yet it is, after all, subject to culture, and permanency of religious life may be gained as the fruit of watchfulness and toil. It is needful,

1. That we determine to act only for sufficient reasons. The Christian life must be accepted from a rational conviction that it is the truest and worthiest life that can be lived—the only life, indeed, that is certainly safe and unquestionably promotive of our best interests. There may be questions involved in the Christian faith which we do not fully understand, and there may be doubts which we know not how to answer. But it is still capable of clearest proof, not only that the evidence in favor of Christianity is immensely superior to all evidence against it, but also that wherever there is

doubt, if we give the benefit of the doubt to the safe side, we must decide for the religion of Jesus. In such a conviction as this should our religious life be based..

2. That we allow ourselves to be influenced by nothing, in the way of opposition, that does not disturb this consciousness of security. Many of what are deemed plausible objections to the Christian faith do not really touch us at this point. We mean to say that even if such objections should prove true, there is nothing gained by yielding to them. They give us nothing better than we have. If we yield, we are losers, and not gainers. We make no gain either as to life or destiny, by surrendering the Christian faith and life to their claims. Why be disturbed, then, with Spiritism, or Evolution, or Spontaneous Generation? What do they propose in exchange for the sweet peace and precious hope of the believer in Christ? Nothing that is not loss. What do we lose in adhering to Christ, even should any of these hypotheses prove to be correct? Nothing. Then they should never be allowed to disturb our faith. As questions of scientific fact or speculation, they doubtless have value; as affecting the per-

manency of the Christian faith, they are clearly valueless.

3. That we cultivate an *experimental* knowledge of Christianity by diligently practicing its precepts, testing its principles, and putting its teachings to the proof under all the circumstances of daily life. Its adaptedness to our wants, its efficacy in saving us from folly and guiding us in safe and honorable paths, its power to comfort and strengthen in times of trial, its blessed fruits of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, will result in such inwrought convictions of its excellency and divinity, as to forbid all doubt and cause us to walk with firm step and joyful heart.

God's great men have been men of decision. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness."* What is this but to say that though three of God's grandest elect men, who have most influence with him, were to plead in behalf of corrupt and apostate Israel, he would not listen even to their intercessions. And wherein did these men excel? They

* Ezek. xiv. 14.

were *men of one mind*, who, under the most trying circumstances, were still unyielding in their purpose. Noah stood up for God and his truth, when all the world became apostate—faithful among the faithless. Job lost his property, his children, his health, his friends. Floods of calamity swept over him until all was gone that had made life desirable, and there was before him only the prospect of a loathsome death, a cheerless grave, and a dishonored name. Childless, friendless, worse than wifeless, slandered by his best friends and derided by his enemies, his waking hours filled with pain, his sleep disturbed by frightful dreams, and heaven apparently barred against his cries, he still held on to his faith in God, and cried in sublime confidence, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Daniel, at an idolatrous court, mingled with politicians and courtiers, and stood in the midst of corruptions and vices, with clean hands and pure heart, true to God in the face of death. These were God's great men. We must seek to be like them. Remember, "A man of two minds is unstable in all his ways." But the language of the true Christian hero is, "This *one* thing I do: forgetting the

things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

Our Lord often tested those who came to follow him, revealing to them their fatal lack in this particular. When one said to him, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;" his reply was, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." He sought thus to compel him to try himself, whether he was so inspired with one lofty purpose that he could sacrifice every thing for its sake. When another said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," his reply was, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." And when another said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house," his reply—never to be forgotten—was, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."†

I have a poem in my mind, written by

---

* Phil. iii. 13. † Luke ix. 57–62.

Rev. J. G. Lyon, LL.D., bearing on this subject, which has never obtained a circulation equal to its merits. I have often given copies of it to young disciples, to be committed to memory, and they have earnestly thanked me, in after years, for the help it gave them in hours of temptation. I will copy it here for you, with the request that you memorize it, and repeat it when you are thronged with oppositions and discouragements:

In the sleepless Atlantic, remote and alone,
Is a rock which the wild waves eternally beat;
Its echoing bulwarks with sea-drift are strewn,
And dark are the waters that roll at its feet.
Let the shrill winds of ocean go forth as they may,
It wars with the surges and knows not of rest;
Its pinnacles drip with the fast-falling spray,
And billows are breaking in foam on its breast.

But tho' breakers and whirlwinds around it may sweep,
That hermit of ocean lives conquering on!
And the mariner sees it still breasting the deep,
As it flung back the surf in the years that are gone.
All worn, but unshaken, that desolate rock,
Fast rooted where islands and earthquakes are born,
Looks fearlessly down on the breaker's rude shock,
And laughs the vain force of the tempest to scorn.

Oh, thou that reverest a Master above,
And sighest for glories immortal and high—
Be strong in believing and steadfast in love,
When passion is loud and the tempter is nigh!

When infidels bid thee be false to thy Lord—
  When they laugh at the faith that ennobles and saves—
When they scoff at his people, and rail at his word,
  Be thou to their wildness that rock in the waves!

Aye! stand like that sea-cliff! nor ask thou to shun
  The work of obedience, the care or the cost;
There are treasures of infinite price to be won,
  There are treasures of infinite price to be lost.
With the wiles of the tempter, his vengeance or mirth,
  Strive thou as the bold and the faithful have striven;
And the sorrows and toils of thy warfare on earth
  Shall be paid in the peace and the raptures of heaven.

LETTER XII.

FLESH AND SPIRIT.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."—GAL. v. 17.

AT the risk of repeating some things said in former letters, I call your attention to a question, the proper understanding of which will relieve you from many distressing perplexities. It is important that you know something of your own nature, especially as a compound nature of flesh and spirit; or you will be frequently disturbed with fears and anxieties which are needless.

We are, from one point of view, animals. We have an animal organization, animal appetites and instincts, animal wants; and are subject to the conditions of animal life. We have also a spiritual nature—spiritual faculties, spiritual aspirations, and capacities for high spiritual achievement and enjoyment. In a perfect man—perfect, we mean, for the purposes of our existence on earth—all these

animal and spiritual forces would be found working in harmony—every animal desire in healthful activity, every animal function fully performed, but the whole animal nature controlled by and subordinated to the spiritual forces of our being. The passions would be servants, not masters. An enlightened moral and religious sentiment would reign supreme, and "bring every thought—every purpose—into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

But we are not perfect. Sin has destroyed the balance of powers in our nature; the spirit has been dethroned, and the flesh has usurped the throne, and blind, reckless passion drives us furiously and governs us madly. We inherit a disordered nature. We are also born into a world where the animal nature gets the start, by some years, of the spiritual—for "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is animal, and afterward that which is spiritual."* Then the material system to which we belong plies us with constant appeals to animal desires. In addition to all this, false systems of education, at home and at school, are apt to magnify material interests and excite only

* 1 Cor. xv. 46.

earthly ambitions. The result is, that in place of restoring a proper balance to the unbalanced nature we start with, home and society are apt to pamper the flesh and nurse it into greater dominion.

You will see at a glance, that the question as to what our character shall be, depends on the dominance of flesh or spirit in our lives. A carnal sovereignty can only produce a carnal life and character; spiritual supremacy will result in a spiritual life and character.

Now the object of the gospel is to reëstablish the spirit's sovereignty. The reason we have to be "born again" is, that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the spirit is, as we have seen, alike by virtue of our inheritance, our surroundings, and our false education, subordinated. But in the second birth, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—the spirit takes the precedence and enters on a new life in which it is supreme over the flesh.

Now we come to the point where we can remove the painful mystery which hangs over so many young Christian lives. Let me have your close attention. As, while the flesh reigns supreme, the spirit still asserts

its power and wages conflict with the flesh; so, when the spirit is exalted to the supremacy, the flesh still asserts its power and wages war with the spirit. Regeneration destroys no fleshly appetite, annihilates no force of our nature. That which is accomplished for us in conversion is the exaltation of the spirit to dominion over the flesh. The Spirit of God pours in upon the human spirit, through the Gospel, light and heat—truth and love—which change the affections, reverse the currents of desire and sympathy, and fill the spirit with strength to break from its bondage and enter into the liberty of the sons of God. Thus begotten to a new life, we are "baptized into Christ," and thus "born of water and of the Spirit." But, we repeat, no fleshly desire or force has been annihilated; only subjugated. As long as we remain in the flesh these carnal forces will seek to regain dominion, and can only be prevented by constant vigilance. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Often, when these uprisings of fleshly desires occur, the young Christian is made to fear that he was not truly regenerated; that he is still a child of wrath. We deem it needful to tell you,

therefore, that *this warfare can never cease* until we are released from the flesh. The evidence of our being born again, is not that we feel no temptations, have no conflict; but that we resist and conquer. "He that is born of God doth not *work* sin"—no longer follows this as his calling; but, on the contrary, works righteousness.* It does not mean that he shall never be tempted, nor that he shall never be overcome by temptation, but that the *vocation*, the regular pursuit of his life, is righteousness. The word *commit*, in the text referred to, does not fairly express the idea of the original.

From these premises, certain conclusions follow:

1. The Christian life is necessarily one of warfare with the flesh. Its genuineness is to be sought, not in the absence of evil from our hearts, but in the triumph of the spirit over the flesh.

2. The idea of an instantaneous leap into the perfection of holiness is unscriptural and absurd. Perfection can only result from steady triumphs won in a prolonged warfare with the flesh.

---

* 1 Jno. iii. 9.

3. True Christian life, in its highest sense, does not forbid the legitimate gratification of animal desires. All true pleasure that belongs to earth the Christian may enjoy.

4. A thousand questions in casuistry must be settled in the light of the truths we have here presented. Questions relating to business, associations, amusements, dress, amount of wealth to possess, gratification of the love of art, books, etc., are not settled for the Christian by statute, and can not be settled by one for another. The question to be settled in all these cases is, *Will it tend to purify and elevate my spirit?* or, *Will it tend merely to gratify and pamper the flesh?* The answer to these questions must settle what is right for us in all things not regulated by express precept. Whatever will promote true spiritual desires and aims, is lawful.

5. Our destiny will be settled by the carnal or spiritual character we form. "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. He that sows into the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows into the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."*

* Gal. vi. 8.

This is an everlasting law of the moral universe. The thoughts and loves and purposes, the words and deeds of every day and hour, are weaving the web of our destiny. In a very important sense, our heaven or hell will be what we ourselves make it. The harvest will correspond with the seed-sowing. What a sacredness and awfulness does this give to life—to our daily thoughts and sentiments, our words and actions! They do not die, but live, and grow, and bear an eternal fruitage!

"We paint ourselves the joy, the fear,
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

"The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We'll reap as we have sown.

"Still shall the soul around it call
The shadows which it gathered here,
And, painted on the eternal wall,
The past shall re-appear."

Let me pray you, beloved in Christ, to be diligent in spiritual culture. When you feel all unequal to this conflict, go to the mercy-seat in your weakness, to Him who "knows what sore temptations mean," and

ask to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.* "Be filled with the Spirit." Store your spirit with all bright and pure and beautiful things, and feed it constantly with the bread of life. If, in any thoughtless hour, you are led captive by sin, rise and renew the battle, and never give it over until you gain the victory. The promise is to him that *overcometh.* "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son." †

---

* Eph. iii. 16. † Rev. xxi. 7.

LETTER XIII.

LOVE FOR JESUS.

"Lovest thou me?"—JOHN xxi. 16.

I CAN not conclude these letters without an effort to impress you with the importance of your *personal relations to Jesus, the Christ.* To many, the Christian religion wears the aspect of a subtle and mysterious theology—a dry study, barren of results to the common mind. It has, indeed, a theology and a philosophy, and these are not without value to minds capable of that kind of study; but let me assure you that this has little to do with your Christian life or your Christian enjoyment. The adaptedness of the gospel to the wants of the race is in nothing more clearly shown than in its presentation of truth and grace, not in abstract reasonings, but in a concrete form—in a living embodiment. It is God *in* Christ. The gospel reveals to us *a person* "full of

grace and truth," "in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"*—"God manifest in the flesh."† In this person God is brought down to us, so that an apostle could say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life—for the life was manifested, and we have seen it—that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."‡ In this person, not only is God brought down to us, but man is exalted from the dust into fellowship with God, and placed on that plane of obedience to which the grace of God invites us. The faith which is required of us is faith in a person, and not in speculations *about* him; the love which is to rule us, is *love of a person*, and not of a body of speculative doctrines. To believe in Jesus, to love Jesus, to obey Jesus—this is the religion of the New Testament. Humanity has ever sighed for an *embodiment* of divinity; the proneness to idolatry has its

---

* Col. ii. 9. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ 1 John i. 1–3.

root in this craving of our nature, and the hero-worship of all ages but shows how readily mankind can be led on this principle.

You can not carefully note your own heart-history without knowing that on *personal attachments* your happiness largely depends, and by personal affection your life is largely swayed. You grow into the image of those whom you tenderly love and sacredly revere. Insensibly you adopt their thoughts, accept their reasonings, copy their ways, and catch the inspiration of their lives, whether for good or evil. The gospel but carries this principle to its highest possible perfection in presenting to us One infinitely wise, good, and lovely, and introducing us into intimate personal relations with Him, so that He may live in our hearts and mold our lives. The more entirely we confide in Him, the more earnestly we love Him, the surer we are of being "changed into his image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." * Hence, Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and

---

*2 Cor. iii. 18.

gave himself for me."* The wondrous transformation in the character of Paul is thus traced to this *love of a personal Saviour.* He therefore esteemed all things as nothing in comparison with "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord."

If you have, indeed, surrendered heart and life to Him, I can do nothing to help you, only as I can induce you to know Him better and love Him more. What he is in himself, as the Son of God; what he has become to us, as the man Christ Jesus; what he is in his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King: this you need to know, and here you may constantly grow in knowledge.

Let me especially urge it on you to allow no theological reasonings or pulpit theorizings to put Jesus far away from you, as one whom you can only view at an infinite distance. *Keep Jesus near to you.* Remember that if there is a basis of confidence and of reverence in the evidences of his divinity, there is also a basis of comfort and strength in his *perfect humanity.* He identified himself with us; possessed our nature; felt all our temptations; entered into our deepest

* Phil. iii. 8.

sufferings; and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Study his life and teachings, with a view to draw continually nearer to him in trust and love. Cultivate a sense of his presence. Rely on his intercessions. Cast all your care upon him. He is the vine; his disciples are the branches. His emphatic assurance is, "Cut off from me, ye can do nothing." "As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. . . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." *

This leads us to say that not only does personal attachment sway us when we enjoy personal intercourse with those whom we love, but in their absence we commune with them by means of letters, and feel their power in us and over us. In proportion to our love and confidence is the certainty

---

* John xv. 1–11.

that we will incorporate their ideas and principles and tastes into our own being. Nor is this true alone of living friends. We study the biography of one who has long since passed away; we learn to admire his character and venerate his name, and grow enthusiastic in our devotion to his teachings. Surely, then, we may be swayed by the absent Christ, and it may be said of us as of the ancient disciples, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* But there is this important difference: our Christ still lives, and is still able to communicate with us in tender and loving ways. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, *and will manifest myself to him.*"† These providential and spiritual manifestations of Jesus, in deliverances, in heavenly consolations, in blissful spiritual communion, are among the most precious experiences of the Christian life; and they accumulate in the life of the faithful disciple until his

---

* 1 Peter i. 8. † John xiv. 21.

confidence in the truth concerning Christ has all the certainty of knowledge. I shall feel that you are safe so long as I have the assurance that you really love our Lord Jesus Christ.

LETTER XIV.

LEISURE HOURS—SOCIETY.

"After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days."—JOHN ii. 12.

I WRITE to you, my young friend, freely and frankly, on such topics as I think will be profitable to you, without regard to logical connection in the subjects discussed. These are meant simply as friendly communications, free as possible from even religious conventionalisms, in which I allow my mind to roam freely and gather what it finds of value, here and there, for your benefit. In looking over the letters I have already written, I find I have failed to treat of one matter of much moment—the employment of your leisure hours. We are so constituted that, after severe toil, or steady employment in one monotonous and weary round, we need rest, diversion, recreation. And this, while it is a legitimate demand

alike of muscle, nerve, and brain, is not at war with the purity and dignity of the religion of Jesus. We have endeavored to show you that, in a true view of the Christian religion, every part of our nature is contemplated in its legitimate wants, and that the highest ideal of a Christian life is that in which all the faculties, passions, and forces of our nature are harmonized and brought into healthy development under the supreme sway of an enlightened religious sentiment. Christian piety, then, is not asceticism, any more than it is worldly dissipation. Neither is it a round of stiff and solemn meditations and observances, at set hours—an unearthly sanctimoniousness, which can only be indulged in set hours and on set occasions. *It is a life.* It is a pure, and bright, and truthful inspiration, that sways all our actions, words, and purposes—so that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God.* I would guard you, therefore, against that ungainly view and practice of religion which would exile you from society, forbid cheerfulness and mirthfulness, and lead you to frown on every

*1 Cor. x. 31.

thing bright and beautiful and pleasant in life, as at war with your religious profession. There is a fine touch of human nature in the text which we have chosen as a motto for this letter. Our Lord had barely entered on his painful ministry of toil and sacrifice. He had gone through that series of fierce temptations in the wilderness, and had gathered up a small company of disciples, with whom he had gone to the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Here he recognized the sacredness of the marriage relation, and doubtless entered into the social festivities of the occasion. Before him lies a toilsome, burdensome, and sorrowful ministry—three years, to be crowded with toils and cares, and burdened with griefs such as none other had ever borne. He knew that when once fully launched on the current that was to bear him to the cross, there would be no rest, and he was not yet, perhaps, fully recovered from the exhaustion of that forty days' fast and mighty contest with Satan. The quiet and sweet home scenes in which he had enjoyed the society of his mother and his kindred, he is about to abandon utterly. Yet his heart clings to them; they are not easily surrendered, even for duty's sake; so he goes

with his mother and brethren and disciples to Capernaum—to which it is likely his mother's home had been transferred—and tarried there several days in quiet enjoyment of the society he loved so well, before he sets himself resolutely to his mighty task. Let it not be thought for a moment, then, that the human sympathy which binds us to home and friends, or the love of association with kindred spirits which leads us to dismiss business cares and even religious employments for needful rest and social enjoyment, is at war with Christ's ideas of a true religious life.

But here, I am aware, I am treading on dangerous ground. There is so much love of social enjoyment, and so much anxiety to escape from severe toil, that it needs no argument to strengthen a tendency in that direction. Moreover, leisure hours are so fraught with temptation, and social enjoyments so constantly run into wild excesses, that there is need to lean the other way for the sake of safety. All this I know; still, because there is great danger in one extreme, there is no need of swinging to another. I would have you capable of self-poise, and the beauty of your life and character

to be found largely in symmetry. I have, therefore, felt it to be right to guard you against one extreme in these few hints; and I now propose to guard you against the other in the counsel I am about to give.

It is a serious matter to dispose of our leisure hours wisely, so as to get out of them all the good they can afford, unmixed with evil. This is especially true in reference to young people in our cities and large towns. There are so many temptations and snares—so many inviting paths strewn at the entrance with flowers that lead only to death—so many social influences, attractive and apparently harmless, that prove to be subversive alike of piety and morality, that it calls for great caution and scrutiny in forming your friendships and choosing your associates. I will not darken these pages with recitals of what I know of the awful wreck of health, of peace, and of character, on the part of as noble and promising youths as I have known in my large circle of acquaintances—simply through unworthy associations. My pen trembles even now, as this bare reference calls up in memory the visions of ruin and despair which I have been compelled to see, and which I would gladly blot from my recollection forever

But I can not speak of them. Read, I pray you, the Book of Proverbs. Commit it to memory. Its words of warning will meet you a thousand times on the great battle-field of life, in hours of danger, and break the spell of sin's tremendous witcheries, and save you from the chains of a hopeless bondage.

But now, about your leisure hours. You will have many, especially in the long winter evenings. What will you do with them? Allow me to suggest certain methods of employing them, which may help you and many more to turn them to profitable account:

1. Decide to spend them mainly at home. That is the safest, and ought to be the sunniest, place for you. You have parents, brothers and sisters. Determine to minister to their enjoyment, and let them see that your religion makes you cheerful, loving and self-denying. When the work of the day is over, and study hours are past, make the hour or two of social enjoyment around the hearthstone gladsome with innocent amusements. You can have readings, story-telling, music, charades, discussion of the events of the day, talks over your favorite books and papers, and innocent diversions of various

kinds such as your parents will approve. I especially advise attention to music, vocal and instrumental. It is pleasant to have the house echo with glad songs. It is good to cheer the toils of the day with snatches of sacred song. It soothes and comforts and sanctifies.

2. Now and then it will be pleasant to invite a number of young friends to spend the evening with you—thus making your home a center of social attraction. The invitations should only be issued after consultation with your parents, and should include only such as they and you agree to regard as suitable associates.

3. This will, of course, lead to return visits, and you will thus establish a circle of desirable associates, and your social entertainments will be, under the eyes of parents and friends, free from contaminating influences. Keep yourself free from all associations of which you are unwilling to have your parents informed. I do not say that your company must be sought entirely in the church; but I would limit it to such as at least respect religion, and who will not seek to draw you away from your steadfastness in Christ.

4. Form a society of the young people in your neighborhood for social and literary culture, to meet, say, once in two weeks. Have readings, declamations, essays, discussions and music, with now and then a lecture when you can obtain it, or a public exhibition when you are ready for it.

5. Have a meeting of the young Christians in your church, or in your neighborhood. With one to preside who was named at the last meeting, let the services be opened by brief recitations of scripture by all present—each rising in turn and repeating one, two or three verses. Follow this with a hymn, and the hymn with a brief prayer. Then let a chapter of scripture be read, followed by a hymn and a prayer. Then let those who have been requested beforehand to be in readiness, follow with brief exhortations, or brief essays on special topics prepared for the occasion. Let an opportunity be given to any others who wish to speak or pray. Sometimes it will be well for the president to select various passages bearing on a particular subject, to be read by different persons when called on. Or, the exercises may be varied by announcing a week beforehand a subject to be considered at the

next meeting, which shall give direction and shape to all that is said and done. Let all the exercises be brief and lively, prompt and earnest, and let the entire service occupy not more than one hour. This will give time, after dismission, for social greetings, attention to strangers, and informal religious conversation.

6. If there is a regular prayer-meeting of the church, you will want to attend that, and bear some humble part in its services.

7. If there is a Sunday-school teachers' meeting, you will desire to be regular and punctual in your attendance there.

8. Make it a point to spend an evening, now and then, in visits to the sick, the poor, the desolate; and learn what you can do to help them. You will bless yourself in blessing them. Be ready for any benevolent mission to which the church may call you.

I have made these suggestions, not supposing that you will have leisure for all the objects I have mentioned; but that, out of these, you may select such as will do you most good and make you most helpful to others.

Recreation should not, by sensible young people, be made the principal thing in the occupancy of their time. Recreation is

needful, but it is exceptional. The long winter evenings should be largely devoted to *study*. If you are not going to school, and your evenings are not occupied in the study of your lessons, then take up some special course of reading and investigation—history, biography, or some special science, such as astronomy, geology, chemistry, natural history. If you have not books, borrow them, or earn money enough to buy them, or club with others in the neighborhood equally ambitious with yourself to gain knowledge, and thus cheapen the cost of books. You can not afford to waste these precious hours. To succeed in life these days, you must be at least intelligent, and in some department you must be learned. A prosperous and useful manhood or womanhood depends much on faithfulness and diligence in acquiring knowledge. An hour or two every evening wisely employed in this way will help you along wonderfully.

Watch your odd moments. Have a book at hand, so that in any ten minutes of leisure you may read enough to lead you to profitable reflection when you return to business. By this means you will, in the course of years, master many volumes.

Remember, too, that a change of labor is rest. Do not, therefore, exclude the idea of *work* from your leisure hours, for it may prove to be pleasurable and restful—much more so than abandonment to idleness.

If you can learn to occupy your leisure hours wisely, you will avoid many of the greatest dangers that beset the path of the young pilgrim; and if this letter shall aid you to escape the snares of idleness and aimlessness, it will not have been written in vain.

LETTER XV.

SUGGESTIONS.

"Hear counsel, and receive instruction."—PROV xix. 20.

WHAT remains to be said for your benefit, my young friend, must be condensed into brief suggestions; but, as "a word to the wise is sufficient," let me hope that suggestions, starting you to think for yourself, may prove more beneficial than elaborate essays. Indeed, in all I have written, I have had in view only to start you in right paths of investigation and reflection, and prepare you to do your own thinking.

1. Never trifle with a tender conscience or with tender emotions. It is easy to grieve them away, never to return.

2. Be not ambitious to venture on the edge of a precipice, where one false step may dash you to destruction, when there is safe ground to stand on. Go into perilous places only when duty calls; and then forget

not the wisest of prayers, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil."

3. There is a border-land between the false and the true, where every thing is in doubt. Truth and falsehood, evil and good, along the border are so nearly alike or so cunningly amalgamated, that it is easy to be deceived. It is not safe to dwell there. Keep on sure ground.

4. Love every body with the love of benevolence; and, as you have opportunity, do good to all; but have only a few intimate friends, and let these be first proved.

5. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." Avoid foolish talking and jesting, and especially keep your tongue and your soul from the defilement of vulgar or filthy communications.

6. Have a horror of *secret sins*. Never imagine that they are harmless, because others do not know them. The most fearful of all thoughts is, that *you know them yourself*, and can not escape their curse.

7. However poor you may be, do not deny yourself the luxury of *giving*, for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Remember the widow's two mites.

8. Do not grow weary in well-doing, be-

cause you see no outside fruits of your labors. *Your own soul is better for it*, even if others abuse or pervert your good deeds.

9. While anxiously careful to promote your own spiritual interests, do not allow this to degenerate into a *selfish* sort of piety, which knows only *my* heart, *my* feelings, *my* happiness. Oftentimes the best way to promote your own happiness will be to forget self in your concern for the welfare of others. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

10. At the same time, allow nothing to crowd out the hour allotted to your own spiritual culture. We are creatures of habit, and habit makes every thing easy. Unless we preserve the *habit* of reading, meditation and prayer, we shall soon be cut off from spiritual supplies, and religious duties will prove irksome.

11. Remember that no furloughs are granted in the Lord's army, and that it is death for a sentinel to be found sleeping at his post.

12. Do the thing that is next to you. Be not ambitious to *make* reputation, or to *seek* posts of honor. If you see to present duty,

God will open your way and direct your paths. The only sure way of climbing, is to climb *down*. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

13. To learn to *rule*, we must first learn to *serve*. "He that will be greatest among you, let him be servant of all."

14. Remember that the King's daughter is brought unto him "in raiment of needlework." * *A stitch at a time* produces the beautiful garments. Thus is the raiment of righteousness prepared. A stitch at a time, and *according to pattern*.

15. Avoid strife, unless to avoid it involves a surrender of principle.

16. Three things hold forever inviolable—the dictates of your conscience, your promises to others, and your vows to God.

17. Be in the highest, deepest, broadest sense, truthful. Tremble at the very shadow of a falsehood. Unless your soul is wedded most loyally to truth, the very foundation of your character is treacherous.

18. Be humble without meanness, firm without stubbornness, amiable without flabbiness, manly without haughtiness, independ-

* Ps. xlv. 14.

ent without a disregard of what is due to others, earnest without impulsiveness, benevolent without ostentatiousness, and pious without "sour godliness."

19. Have a care of your body as well as of your soul. Have due regard to cleanliness and neatness. In your diet, your habits, your dress, pay proper attention to health and comfort. A diseased body is often the source of much spiritual distress.

20. Without being an abject slave to custom, crush out all ambition to be offensively odd in dress, in manner, or in speech. Avoid the extremes of slovenliness and dandyism. It is alike foolish to despise appearances and to enslave one's self to mere display. Let your moderation be known to all.

21. Never despise the poor, the deformed, or the unfortunate. Be kind to all, but especially to those who need it most. It will come back in blessings to your own soul.

I have said enough. May I hope that all I have written will be received in the same spirit of love in which it is tendered? I can have no greater joy than to know that you walk in the truth. If these counsels shall dissipate doubts, strengthen faith, make clearer the path of duty, or give refreshment

to the heart that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, then they will bring to the writer a rich reward.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

AIDS TO DEVOTION.

"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."—LUKE xi. 1.

THIS request from a disciple of Jesus—one evidently as yet in the feebleness of spiritual infancy—finds an echo in thousands of hearts. It is one thing to possess the spirit of devotion; it is another to be able to express one's desires intelligently, scripturally, and satisfactorily. Our Lord, in teaching his disciples not only in what spirit and under what circumstances they should pray, but also after what *manner*, recognizes this as a proper subject of instruction.

The following prayers and thanksgivings are not to be regarded as forms to be adhered to and repeated word for word; but rather as practical illustrations of various phases of worship, to aid the young disciple to form distinct conceptions of adoration, petition, and thanksgiving, and also to be helpful to him in embodying his thoughts and desires in suitable words. Thus regarded and used, we are persuaded they will meet a felt want of very many

young Christians, especially such as have never been taught to pray, and who are embarrassed by their own indefiniteness of conception, ignorance of scriptural teaching, and inexperience.

Let us say that one of the greatest hinderances to devotion among the conscientious and devout, arises from an overwhelming sense of God's greatness and their own nothingness. It seems incredible to them that God will condescend to listen to the cries of mortals so weak and insignificant, "whose foundation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth." It looks to them like presumption, bordering on impiety, to carry their little cares and anxieties and sorrows and struggles to the throne of the Infinite One, and dare to seek the eye or ear of that Being whose name is exalted above all blessing and praise. The world we here inhabit, in comparison with the universe of universes, is but an infinitesimal mote. It might be stricken from existence, with all that inhabit it, and it would be but as the dropping of a pebble into the ocean—a momentary splash, a local commotion, unfelt and unknown to the universe at large. And if this can be said of the globe, with its fourteen hundred millions of inhabitants, what unspeakable presumption for just one little mortal to demand audience of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, who dwells in light unapproachable! This feeling drives many from the throne of grace, and quenches all fervor in the hearts of many whose sense of duty and of want still holds them at least to the forms of prayer.

We can not, within our space, enter into a full consideration of this difficulty, but we suggest two thoughts, which, properly understood, will, we think, remove it.

1. Physical magnitude is not the proper test in this case. Man's value in the sight of God does not depend on size or weight. The properties of *matter* settle nothing as to the nature or the value of *spirit*. Man's spiritual nature, in its kinship with God, has a value that overshadows all physical magnitudes, and outweighs all suns and systems. It is not a lump of organized matter, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois, that asks to be heard of God, but *his own child*, a spirit that is God's own offspring, against whose intrinsic value the whole material universe has not the weight of a feather. Nothing can express its value but the Life that was laid down for its redemption.

2. The *infinite* perfection of Jehovah is precisely that which should inspire us with confidence. Were he less than infinite, we might conceive of him, under the conditions of time and space, as so absorbed in his own greatness, or as so exhausting his ability on great concerns, as to be unwilling or unable to stoop to our wants. But, being infinite, these distinctions of small and great are lost in His presence. His attention and care have been as definitely bestowed on the organization of the animalculæ, myriads of which have ample room in a drop of water, as in the construction of mighty suns and systems. The microscope

as fully reveals Him in minute things, as the telescope in vast things. The minute and the vast, the atom and the world, the ephemeron that flutters its brief life out in an hour, and the seraph that moves on tireless wing about the throne of heaven through the eternal years, are alike under His cognizance. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Not a hair of our heads that He has not numbered. While receiving the homage of heaven's unnumbered hosts, He still listens to the sigh of the babe and the moan of the broken heart. This is the very perfection of His nature —that *all* things are alike open to His gaze, and under the control of His power. It is because He is God and not man—infinite and not finite—that we can have the full assurance of faith in His knowledge of us and care for us. It is not because our conceptions of God are so *exalted* that we are troubled with these distressing fears, but rather because they are so limited and so feeble; and we need to heed the counsel of the Psalmist, "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace." Truly did Faber say:

O Majesty, unspeakable and dread!
Wert thou less mighty than thou art,
Thou wert, O Lord, too great for our belief,
Too little for our heart.

But greatness which is infinite, makes room
For all things in its lap to lie;
We should be crushed by a magnificence
Short of infinity.

Great God! our lowliness takes heart to play
Beneath the shadow of thy state;
The only comfort of our littleness
Is that thou art so great.

ADORATION.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! who was, and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for thou hast created all things, and by thy will they were called into existence. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Yea, thou art God alone, and there is none beside thee. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy: thou art a God of truth and without iniquity; just and right art thou. There is no searching of thine understanding. Oh, the depth of the riches of thy wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to thee, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of thee, and through thee, and for thee, are all things: to whom be glory forever.

I am lost in wonder, O my God, when I try to think of thine infinite perfections—the eternal and exhaustless treasures of thy might, the infinite resources of thy knowledge and wisdom, thine un-

changeable justice, truth, and holiness. I can not worship thee as I would, for thy name is exalted above all blessing and praise. Yet to me thou art nearer in thine infinite condescension. I am awed at the greatness of that power which upholds all things, at the ineffable splendors of that holiness before which seraphs veil their faces. But my soul rejoices in that goodness which opens its hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing; and it fills me with delight to know that whilst thou reignest over all worlds, and receivest the adoration of the heavenly hosts, thou also hearest the sighings of the prisoner, the breathings of the infant, and the cry of the young ravens. Then may not I come, O gracious God! little and weak and unworthy as I am, and bring my poor offerings of worship to thee? Oh, my soul blesses thee, that thou dwellest not only in the high and holy place, and inhabitest eternity, but with him also that is of a broken heart, and who trembles at thy word. Thou art nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and savest such as be of a contrite spirit. Then cast me not away from thy presence, O Lord, but graciously accept my offerings of reverence, love, and gratitude.

O King eternal, immortal, invisible, thou only wise God, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, thou art yet not far from me. Thou art here, even here; thou compassest all my paths; thou knowest my sitting down and my rising up, my going out and my coming in; and there is not a

thought of my heart, but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou searchest the hearts and triest the reins of the children of men. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who, O Lord, could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; blessed be thy name. Most of all, then, would I adore thee for thine infinite mercy and compassion. Thou hast made thyself known in the gospel of salvation. In the face of Jesus, thy beloved Son, my longing soul beholds thee, and learns of the riches of thy mercy to the sinful. Before the cross my wondering and joyful heart pours out to thee all its treasures of gratitude and love. I can not speak in words to thee, O Lord, what my heart feels and knows of peace and rest in thy covenant love. When I was forgetful of thee, thy mercy sought me out, and thy message of peace by Jesus Christ won me from the ways of death. Thou hast received my offering of a broken heart. Thou hast forgiven all my sins. Thou enablest me, by thy Spirit, to look up into thy face and say, My Father! And now I am thy child! And thou lovest me with an everlasting love! And thou hast said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee! O my God, my Father! receive the tribute I bring to thee. My soul rejoices in thee, and in Jesus my Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit my Comforter. My tongue is weak to speak thy praise; but thou knowest my heart. I beseech thee to receive the love which I offer thee, and lift upon me the light of thy countenance, and give me peace. And enable me,

now and ever, to trust, love, worship, and serve thee, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. Amen.

THANKSGIVING.

Merciful Father! with gladness I come to thine altar, and lay upon it, in the name of Jesus, my sacrifice of praise. Thou art the Father of lights, from whom descendeth every good and perfect gift. I live, and move, and have my being in thee. In thine hand my breath is, and thine are all my ways. Thou art the fountain of being and of blessedness. I thank thee, gracious God, for my being—for life and health; for peace and safety; for all the rich endowments of my nature—the capacities for knowledge and wisdom, for love and trust, and for ever-increasing enjoyment, which thou hast bestowed upon me. I thank thee for home and friends, for food and raiment; and for all that is pleasant and enjoyable in my lot. I thank thee for all the means of improvement with which I am blessed, and for the opportunities granted me of doing good. I thank thee, my Father, for thy loving providences, by which I have been preserved from dangers, from evils, from hurtful snares, and from death; and even for the trials and afflictions that come to me I desire to be grateful, assured that they are intended for my good. I desire never to forget thy benefits with which thou daily loadest me. Thou healest all my sicknesses, thou redeemest my life from

destruction, thou crownest me with loving kindnesses and tender mercies. For these unnumbered and unmerited mercies and compassions, I call upon my soul and all that is within me to bless thy holy name.

And I joy in thy presence, O Lord, that not only to me art thou good, but to all the creatures of thy hand. It gladdens my heart to know that thy tender mercies are over all thy works; that even to those who are forgetful of thee thou art still merciful, and causest thy sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendest rains on the just and unjust. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice; day and night speak to each other of thy unfailing goodness; and heaven and earth are full of the riches of thy bounty.

But, more than all, my soul praises thee for salvation through Jesus, thy Son, my Redeemer. For the blessed gospel of grace; for the Bible, which makes thee and thy salvation known to me; for the forgiveness of sins, the gift of thy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life, I would pour out my heart in thankfulness and love. And for Jesus, the Gift of gifts, by whose precious blood thou hast won me to thyself, and through whom thou makest known to me all thine unspeakable treasures of grace, mercy and peace, I bless thee with all my heart, and hope to praise thee forever and ever. In his holy and ever blessed name, I beseech thee, O Lord, to receive my grateful offerings, poor and unworthy though they be; and,

whatever thou withholdest, grant me ever a thankful heart, and a loving remembrance of all thy gifts.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.

MORNING PRAYER.

Heavenly Father! behold me as I kneel at thy throne of grace, to thank thee for thy constant mercies, and to ask thee for thy care and protection. I laid me down and slept; and I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. Blessed be the Shepherd of Israel, who never slumbers, for guarding my defenseless hours. I thank thee, O Lord, for refreshing sleep; for the light and glory of the morning; for health and strength; for soundness of mind and gladness of heart; for merciful exemption from calamity; and for all that makes life peaceful and desirable.

And now, my Father, I go out to the scenes of a new day. I know not what awaits me; but thou knowest, and to thee I commit my ways. O Lord, guide my steps. Preserve me from sin and folly. Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil. Give me strength for my duties and my trials, and courage to resist every temptation. Guard my heart from the seductions of evil, and my feet from the snares of sin. Hold

up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. May I be able to sanctify the Lord God in my heart. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Help me to remember thy word, and to keep before me the example of Jesus, that I may follow in his steps. Grant me thy Holy Spirit, to strengthen all my holy purposes, and to quicken all my powers to serve thee acceptably. May I be humble and watchful all the day long; and while I endeavor to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, do thou work in me to will and to do of thine own good pleasure. Enable me to do some good this day in thy name. And may the peace of God, that passes all understanding, keep my mind and heart in Christ Jesus. Whatever is sinful in me, forgive, O Lord, and more and more deliver me from every sinful thought, and word, and way. Cleanse me also from secret faults—from the sins and errors of which I am unconscious.

And while I ask these blessings for myself, I would not forget to pray for thy blessing on others. Bless my kindred and friends—my home, with all its beloved ones. May my friends be thy friends too, O Lord, and may we all be one in Christ. May such of them as are yet strangers to thee, be brought to know thee and to joy in thy salvation. Bless all my brethren in Christ. May great grace be on them, and on all the Israel

of God. Bless all who preach thy glorious gospel, and may thy word have free course and be glorified in all lands. Bless those who have gone to bear thy message of love to distant lands. Make them faithful to thee. Set before them an open door. May they be chosen vessels to bear thy truth to the perishing, and may all the nations that are in darkness be visited with the light of thy word, that they may believe and turn to thee. Put it into the hearts of all thy people to work more zealously for thee, and so to live that they may commend the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And, O Lord, let me beseech thee to bless the children of sorrow—the afflicted, the friendless, the bereaved and the dying. Be their refuge and their help in every time of trouble. Bind up the broken-hearted, and give to mourners beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Help me to help them.

And now, Lord, I cast all my care on thee. I am a poor, weak child. I know not what is best for me. I dare not, therefore, presumptuously to urge desires which may be born of ignorance or folly. Only be merciful to me, and cause me to be contented with thy will. In whatever way I may best serve thee, lead me therein, and let it be my highest joy to walk in thy truth and keep thy commandments to the end. Through all changes let my trust in thee abide. In life and death, in time and eternity, be thou my God, and own me

as thy child. And to thy name be ascribed all praise, and honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, now and evermore. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

Merciful Father! I bless thee that thy gracious hand has guided me safely through another day, and that in all its scenes thy loving presence has sustained me. I thank thee for preservation from evil, for strength to perform my duties, and for innumerable blessings and benefits. Especially would I be grateful that thou hast preserved me from sinful ways, and hast enabled me to remember thy precepts, and to cherish in my heart a sense of thy holy presence. Yet I have to lament before thee, O Lord, that in the throng of toils, and cares, and excitements, I have not been able to think of thee as I ought; and I fear that in my thoughts and feelings, my words and actions, there has been much of imperfection, error and sin. I beseech thy forgiveness. Oh, let the blood of Jesus Christ, thy Son, cleanse me from all my sins. Remove, I humbly entreat thee, not only the guilt of my sins, but their power over me. Give me strength to overcome every bad habit. Let me be pure in heart, sweet-tempered, patient, meek and gentle. Make me ever truthful, firm, and unyielding in my devotion to thy precepts; and fill my heart with thy love and thy praise.

And now, my Father, as I lie down to rest, en-

able me with untrembling trust to commit my body and spirit to thy holy keeping. Guard my unconscious hours. Let thine angels have charge concerning me. Grant me refreshing sleep. Let me say with thine ancient servant, I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. Let no evil come nigh our dwelling. Should the summons come to me in the night to give up my account to thee, may I be ready to go to thy presence with joy. If my life is spared, may it be to serve thee more faithfully on the morrow.

I would humbly ask thee, O Lord, to bless what I have done this day according to thy will, whether for myself or for others. May every good thought and word and deed receive thy blessing, and redound to thy praise.

Let thy loving kindness and tender mercy be with all under this roof, and with all whom I love, wherever they are. Watch over them, keep them from evil, and bless them with the joys of thy salvation.

Remember the sufferers who through the tedious night-watches long for the morning; sustain them in their sufferings, and sanctify their afflictions for their spiritual good.

Remember all who are in peril in the hours of darkness, and be as a pillar of fire to guide their steps.

Have mercy on the ungodly, O Lord, who make the night hideous with revelries and madnesses and crimes that shun the light of day, and grant that

they may be alarmed at their sins and be brought to repentance.

Oh Father! while here we enjoy health and peace, in how many homes this night is death claiming his prey! Most earnestly would I pray thee for thy presence and thy blessing in those awful scenes where all human help is vain. Prepare the dying for death and judgment. May the rod and staff of the great Shepherd comfort every lone pilgrim that gropes his way in the valley of the shadow of death, so that, trusting in thee, he may fear no evil.

Blessed Father! as day after day passes, may I be admonished that I am coming nearer to the end of my journey. So teach me to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. And teach me to look forward with ever-increasing confidence and joy to the heavenly land, where there shall be no more night, but where the light of thy presence shall make eternal day. When the night of death comes, may I yield myself to its repose with as little dread as I now know in lying down on my bed to sleep. And when the night of death is past, and the morning of the resurrection dawns, may I awake in thy likeness and partake of the fullness of joy. Graciously listen to my prayers, O Lord my God, and receive my thanksgivings; and exceed in thy mercies all that I dare to ask or think, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A PRAYER IN DISTRESS.

O Lord my God! art thou indeed a very present help in trouble? In all the afflictions of thy children, art thou indeed afflicted? Dost thou care for me, even me, thy poor, weak, suffering child? My heart would eagerly grasp thy promises, and be emboldened to come unto thee with its griefs. Thou hast taught me to come unto thee in every time of need; and in my time of need I come, and beseech thee to regard me in mercy, and hear my cry.

Out of the depths I cry unto thee, O Lord! I am passing through deep waters; let them not overflow me. I am in the fiery furnace of affliction; let not the flame kindle upon me. The storm beats fiercely on my head; be thou my shelter from its fury. May I be enabled to feel, in all this trouble, that thou art with me, and that thou wilt not suffer me to be tried above what I am able to bear. I fear to ask thee for deliverance, for I do not know that deliverance would be best for me. My oppressed soul is prompted to cry, Father, let this cup pass from me; but I pray for grace to be enabled to add, Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. I know not what to pray for as I ought. May thy Spirit help my infirmities. Let me not shrink from any trial into which thou leadest me. If it is best that I endure it, teach me to bear it patiently, and even cheer-

fully, assured that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. But grant, Lord, that it may be made a blessing to me, that I may yet be able to say, as said thy servant of old, It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Let thy grace be sufficient for me.

Let me not dishonor thy name by murmuring or repining. Let not my heart rise up in rebellion against thee. For who or what am I, that I should war against thy holy will? Help me to remember how many mercies are mine, even in the midst of trouble, and give unto me songs in the night. It is of thy mercies that we are not consumed, because thy compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

Blessed Jesus! thou man of sorrows! thou didst drink to the dregs the cup of human suffering. Thou knowest it all, and I joy to know that thou art touched with a feeling of human infirmities. Thou hast trodden the path which I now tread. I am ashamed to speak of my trials when I look at thy bitter cross. But I am weak, and unable to bear this burden, unless help comes from thee. O despise not my cry; but by all thy tears, and toils, and bloody sweat, and dying pangs, I entreat thee to remember me and come to my help. Let the blessed Comforter cheer and strengthen my heart. Increase my faith, and enable me to cling to thee, that I may follow thee not only to the cross, but through the cross to the crown.

O Lord, forgive me if I fail, in my weakness, to bear my trials as I ought. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Be strength to me in my weakness, joy in my sorrow, and peace in my unrest. Through all the darkness and storms of my toilsome pilgrimage, lead me and uphold me, and prepare me for the rest that remaineth for the people of God. There, when the storms are over, and tears are all wiped away, I shall better understand thy dealings with me, and be able to praise thee for the very trials from which now I shrink.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and even from the depths of my troubled heart enable me to praise and adore thee, through Jesus, my hope and trust. Amen.

READING AND MEDITATION.

I am now about to read a portion of the word of God. Do I suitably realize the solemnity of this exercise? When I pray, my soul is overwhelmed with a sense of the sacredness—nay, the awfulness—of speaking to God. I am abashed when I go into the presence of men who are esteemed great. It would be to me a trying experience if called to appear in the presence of a great earthly monarch, and I would have the most anxious regard to every look and word and action, that I might acquit myself becomingly. How, then, is it possible for a rational being to

venture into the presence of the high and holy One who inhabits the praises of eternity, whom the sinless seraphs worship with veiled faces, without profoundest reverence? This I feel. But is it less solemn when God is the speaker and I the auditor? Is it a light thing that God has spoken to man? Were ever words freighted with such wisdom and tenderness and tremendous importance, as those which bear the precious thoughts of God's heart to the heart of man? How thankful should I be that God comes to me in this gentle way—speaking to me by the inspirations of his Spirit, through human lips, in human words; so that here, in my own retirement, I may hear Him without terror, and commune with Him unembarrassed by any dread of the supernatural! And how careful should I be to understand what has been thus revealed—to learn what there is in it for me, and to accept it reverently and joyfully, that it may effectually work in my believing heart! Has not God promised to dwell with him who trembles at his word? Oh, my soul, be humble and reverent when God speaks; keep silence before Him; hush every uprising passion; keep down all vain thoughts; restrain all wandering desires; and look intently into the perfect law of liberty, to behold wondrous things therein.

PRAYER.

O Lord, I am about to read thy holy word. I pray for a teachable spirit. May I come to thee

hungering and thirsting after righteousness. May my soul pant for thee as the hart panteth for the water-brook, and drink of the water of life and be satisfied. Open thou mine eyes to behold wondrous things out of thy law. Enable me to receive the word of the kingdom into a good and honest heart, that I may bring forth fruit unto eternal life. May thy word be a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path; and may I give heed to it as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in my heart. May I love thy law, and rejoice in its teaching as one that findeth great spoil. May it be more desirable to me than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, or the droppings of the honey-comb. Be pleased, O Lord, to enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that when I read I may understand thy will. And may thy doctrine drop upon my waiting spirit as the rain, and thy speech distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. Let thy word be unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart. Save me from every blinding influence of passion and prejudice, and from all perverseness of spirit, lest I should handle thy word deceitfully. And let thy truth search my inward parts and discern the thoughts and intents of my heart. Let me receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save my soul. And do thou search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and show me if there is any wicked way

in me; and lead me in the way everlasting. These petitions I humbly offer to thee in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER ON THE LORD'S DAY.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

I hail with gladness, my Father, the light of this day of rest, and rejoice before thee in that Light, infinitely more glorious than the light of the sun, which has dawned upon the awful darkness of death, revealing life and immortality. Everlasting thanks to thee for the love that speaks from the cross and the life that bursts forth from the sealed sepulchre; for the knowledge of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, who by means of death has conquered him that had the power of death, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Oh, let my faith in the risen Saviour be strong, that I, too, may triumph over every fear of death, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Blessed Jesus! I desire to be willing to

know the fellowship of thy sufferings; wilt thou grant me also to know the power of thy resurrection?

Prepare me, O Lord, to go to thy house to-day with joyful step; to enter thy gates with thanksgiving and thy courts with praise. I beseech thee to purify my soul from all that is offensive to thee, and sanctify all my powers to thy service, that I may keep thine ordinances, and worship with thy saints acceptably. Fill my heart with love, that I may be a blessing to those whom I may meet in thy house, or by the way. Fit me for my work in the Sunday-school, that I may communicate to other hearts what I have learned from thy word, and guide them in the way of salvation. Prepare me for whatever service I may be called to render to thy people this day, and let me feel that it is better to be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Make all the hours of this day happy with the smiles of thy love, the joys of thy sanctuary, and the merciful tokens of thy providence; and greatly help me on my way to heaven.

And let great grace be upon all the Israel of God. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, may his loving presence be there. May all thy saints have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of thy calling, and what the riches of thy glory in the inheritance of the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of thy power toward all who believe, according to the

working of thy mighty power, which was wrought in Christ when thou didst raise him from the dead and set him at thine own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Grant unto them, according to the riches of thy glory, to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Bless, O Lord, the ministers of thy word, in this and in all lands, that they may declare the whole counsel of God, and publish to a dying world the unsearchable riches of Christ. May they have clean hands and pure hearts, and wilt thou touch their lips with a live coal from thine altar, and purge them from all iniquity. May they not handle the word of God deceitfully, but so speak thy truth as to commend it to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And may their labors be blessed alike in calling sinners to repentance and in educating thy children in the ways of righteousness.

Nor would we forget to crave thy mercy in behalf of our race at large. Thou seest how iniquity prevails, and how the multitudes rush on to destruction. O Lord, let thy righteousness go forth as

brightness, and thy salvation as a lamp that burneth, until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. May thy Church arise from the dust and put on her beautiful garments, and shine in the light of God. May her missionaries be sent forth to every land to preach the gospel of life to our perishing race. May the idols of the nations fall to the dust. May the habitations of cruelty be destroyed. May wars cease to the ends of the earth. And may many nations and peoples come to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, to be taught in thy ways and to walk in thy paths. Take unto thee thy great power, O Lord, and reign until the kingdom and dominion shall be thine under the whole heaven. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly for his people above all that they ask or think, unto him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

CONFESSION.

Holy and Righteous Father! I am overcome with awe when I meditate on thy holiness and righteousness. The very heavens are not clean in thy sight. The angels thou hast charged with folly. Thou hast taught us that thou canst not look upon iniquity; how, then, can I, a poor, unworthy sinner, dare to hope for acceptance in thy sight? Although thou hast magnified thy grace

in the forgiveness of all my past sins, and hast received me into covenant with thee, I am still prone to wander from thee, and in thy holy presence am constrained to confess, Behold, I am vile! But thy blessed word assures me that if we confess our sins, thou art faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This emboldens me to come to thee. My sins would drive me from thee; but greater than all my other sins would be that of doubting thy precious word of truth and grace. I will not doubt it. I believe thy promise. Therefore, I come to thee now, to confess before thee my sins and transgressions.

It grieves me, merciful Father, to have to confess to thee, after all thy wondrous love and mercy in my behalf, that I do not love thee as I ought. My warmest affections are but feeble and cold. I live at a great distance from thee. And often, absorbed in the cares of life, I am forgetful of thee, and the creature rather than the Creator enlists my thoughts and affections. Yet I do desire to love thee with all my heart. Wilt thou forgive me this sin, most merciful Father, and shed thy love abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit given unto me?

I confess that my faith in thy word often trembles. Doubts arise in my heart. The way before me is often dark, and I fear to enter the darkness. The seas are often rough and the winds boisterous; and when thou biddest me come to thee over the treacherous waters, I feel myself sinking in the

waves, and am constrained to cry, Lord, save, or I perish. And even though thou dost save, and I promise never to doubt thee more, my weak nature is soon betrayed into new fears and doubts, and it seems as if thou hast hidden thy face from me. O Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Increase my faith, and teach me to endure as seeing him who is invisible.

I confess, with shame, that the flesh, with its affections and lusts, has not been completely crucified. Not only do I feel fleshly promptings to evil, but I am sometimes disposed to listen to these unholy promptings, and do not earnestly abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. The good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do. O Lord, deliver me from this body of death, and let the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus free me from the law of sin and death. I cast myself anew upon thy mercy, and beseech thy forgiveness.

I have to lament the fickleness as well as the feebleness of my affections. I come to thee and commune with thee until my heart feels strong in faith and love, and I promise myself that I will never again forget thee; but ere an hour is gone, faith is swallowed up in sense, and my treacherous heart turns away to the excitements of earthly life, forgetful of thee. Oh for a wholeness of heart in thy service! Oh for an abiding sense of thy presence! Oh for a purified vision, that I might pierce and dissolve these

earthly enchantments, and walk by faith and not by sight. Have mercy on me, O Lord, and forgive, and strengthen, and save me.

I acknowledge, too, that I have not kept my tongue from evil, and my lips from speaking guile. I try to set a guard upon my lips, but oftentimes the sentinel sleeps at his post, and I am betrayed into unguarded speech. Especially is this true when I allow anger to rise within me and master me. I am sometimes rash, peevish, and fretful, and fail of that self-control which ought to distinguish thy children. Oh, teach me to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath; and let my speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

I have great reason to fear that I am selfish—failing to cherish that interest in others which I owe to them; and failing, too, of that self-denial that is needful to enable me to do all the good of which I am capable.

Sometimes I am startled at the discoveries of sinful tendencies and rebellious uprisings in my own heart. I dare not seek to hide these things from thee, O Lord, for thou knowest every secret intent of my heart. Nor would I hide them from myself. I have no hope but in thy mercy. I humbly confess to thee all that I know and feel of my own sinfulness and weakness, and beseech thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to forgive all my sins and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from

thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Hear me, O Lord, in heaven, thy holy habitation; and when thou hearest, forgive. Lift upon me the light of thy countenance, and give me peace. And for thine adorable mercy I will ever praise thee, through Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. Amen.

INTERCESSION.

O Lord my God! while I am happy in the enjoyment of countless blessings from thy bountiful hand, I would not forget those who are shut out from many of these comforts and advantages, either by the inscrutable arrangements of thy providence, or by their own unbelief and rebelliousness.

But let me, first of all, beseech thee, O Lord, to bless those who are very dear to me—my parents, my brothers and sisters, and all my kindred. May those of them who are thine, be abundantly enriched with the treasures of thy grace, and be enabled to reach the full assurance of understanding, of faith, and of hope. Keep them from the evil that is in the world. In their trials and temptations may they not be left to themselves, but may thy grace be sufficient for them. Espe-

cially would I ask, in behalf of my dear father and mother, that thou wouldst lighten their burdens and increase their joy, and make their children obedient, loving and faithful; that we may, in some measure, repay them for their toils and watchfulness, and long-suffering in our behalf. And such as are not thine—O Lord, have mercy on them! Thou knowest the yearnings of my heart toward them, and my constant longings for their conversion. Preserve them from sudden death, that they may not be cut down in their sins and die without hope in Christ. Teach me how to live so as to win them to thy service; and to the unspeakable joy of my own salvation, be pleased to add the joy of aiding in the conversion of those whom I love so well.

Bless, I beseech thee, the congregation of which I am a member. Cause all its members to be followers of God, as dear children, and to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved them and given himself for them. Preserve them from murmurings and disputings, from pride and self-righteousness, and from conformity to the world. May they abound not only in love for each other, but in good will to all their fellow-creatures, so as to do all in their power to relieve the needy and save the perishing. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with them. May those who are actively engaged in good works be abundantly blessed in their deeds, and may their example quicken all others into nobler life. Bless those

who serve the church as elders and deacons, and Bible-school teachers, and ministers of the word. May they have clean hands and pure hearts. May they be abundantly endowed with wisdom and with all needful gifts for the faithful performance of the services to which they have been called, and be kept from all folly and wickedness. Preserve the church from false teachers and from corrupt examples, that we may all shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

May all the churches of thy saints be kept as the apple of thine eye. Keep them, O Father, in the steadfast advocacy and exhibition of thy truth, and graciously lead them into completer knowledge, more perfect consecration, and a more thorough conformity to the letter and spirit of apostolic teaching. I can not but feel that there is much to mourn over in the worldliness, the spiritual indifference, the selfishness, the strifes and alienations, that so extensively prevail, to thy dishonor and to the peril of the souls of multitudes. I long to see thy churches of one mind and of one heart, speaking the same things, and striving together for the faith of the gospel. To this end, give wisdom to those who rule and teach, and bless thy churches with truth-loving guides, and save them from the rule of unreasonable and wicked men.

We feel especially moved to ask thee, gracious Father, to extend thy saving strength to those who are battling with fierce temptations, and

struggling against waves and billows of adversity, that threaten to submerge them. Oh, forsake not thy ransomed ones in the hour of bitter need. Let thy right arm work gloriously in their behalf, to beat back their foes and to defend them even from themselves, when they, in faintness or in madness, think of surrendering to the enemy. May the eternal God be their refuge, and underneath them let thine everlasting arms be found. Although, in thine own wise discipline, thou seemest sometimes to forsake them, and they are left in darkness to battle with contrary winds, yet come to them in their despair, even in the fourth watch of the night, and bid wind and wave be still. Though troubles long continue, may thy saints not fail to trust in thee, and in due time may they be permitted to see the end of the Lord, that he is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

I entreat thee, O Lord, to bless our country—our rulers, legislators and judges, and all who occupy places of trust, and the people on whom thou hast bestowed this goodly heritage. Thou hast caused the lines to fall unto us in pleasant places, and hast wonderfully enriched us with the blessings of civil and religious liberty. Yet we do not prove ourselves worthy of these great gifts. Iniquity abounds. Thy name is blasphemed. Thy word is dishonored. Truth falls in the streets. Justice is dishonored in the places of judgment. Oh that there was a heart in the people to walk in the way of thy commandments! O Lord, give us rulers, legislators and judges that

fear thy name and hate covetousness. Save us from oppressors, from the mad ambitions of corrupt men, and from the cunning schemes of demagogues and tyrants. Especially save us as a nation from unbelief, and from the sins and corruptions that would provoke thy wrath. May intelligence, and virtue, and piety increase and abound, that we may fear God and work righteousness; that thus the great blessings of freedom, which we enjoy, may be continued to the generations yet to come, and this whole land be the temple of thy praise.

Nor would I fail to seek thy blessing for other lands. I long to see this whole earth redeemed unto thee, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. I pray for the benighted, degraded and oppressed of every land. Thy providences are swinging wide open the gates of mighty nations; may thy truth and grace enter in, and turn these nations unto thee. May idolatry, and all superstitions and false religions and wicked governments be overthrown, and the pure and peaceful reign of Jesus be so established that peace on earth and good will to men may every-where abide and abound. O Lord, take unto thee thy great power and reign. May thy churches be stirred up to send forth men and women to bear the message of salvation to the ends of the earth; and may thy presence go with them and open the way of success to them.

Oh my Father! listen to these intercessions; enlarge the sympathies of my heart, that I may more and more feel for the wants and woes of oth-

ers. And while I thus pray to thee for all the children of sin and sorrow, do thou put it into my heart to do all in my power to bless and save them; that thus walking in the footsteps of Jesus, I may enjoy his fellowship and enter more largely into his life. And teach me how, in deed as well as in word, to ascribe all blessing and honor and glory and dominion unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever. Amen.